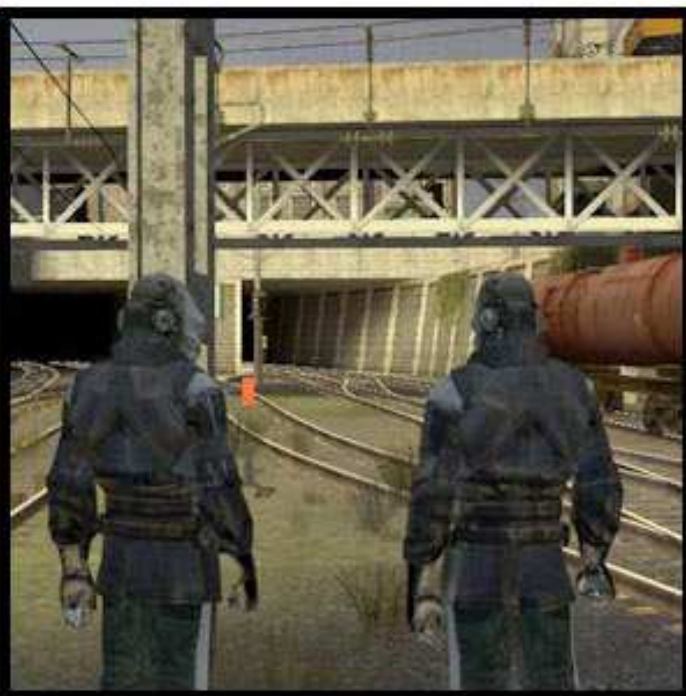
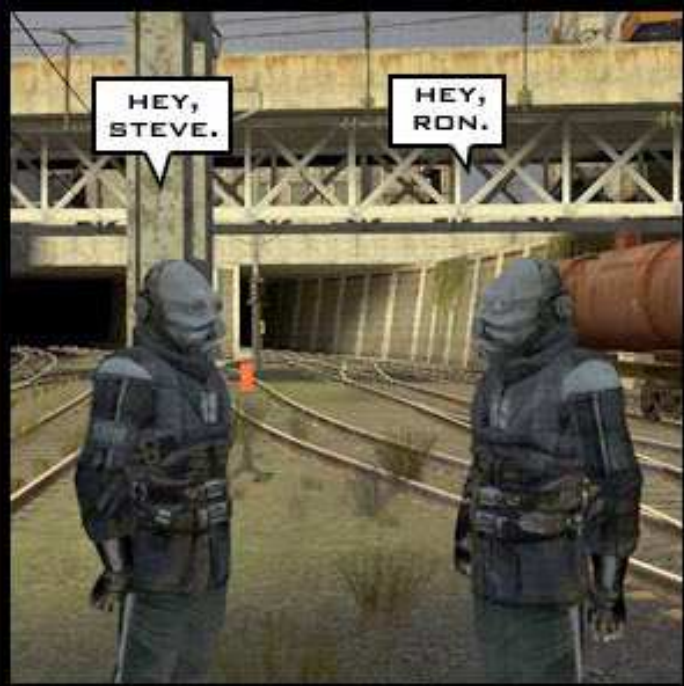




CONCERNED

the half-life and death of gordon frohman

BY CHRISTOPHER C. LIVINGSTON
GREG GALCIK, JOE YUSKA

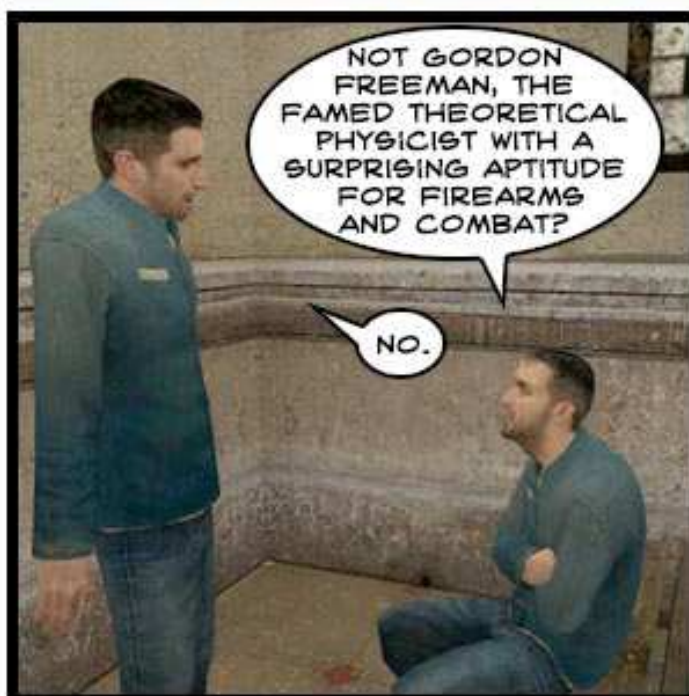


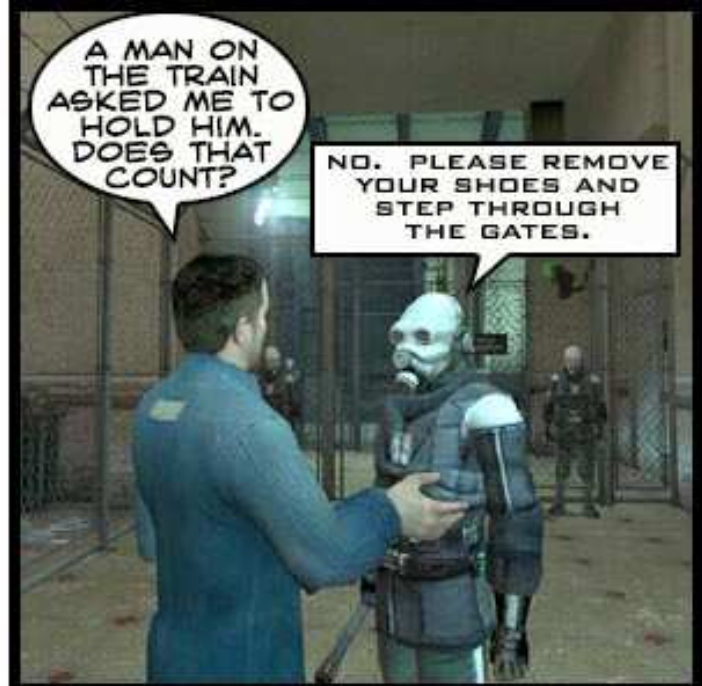




















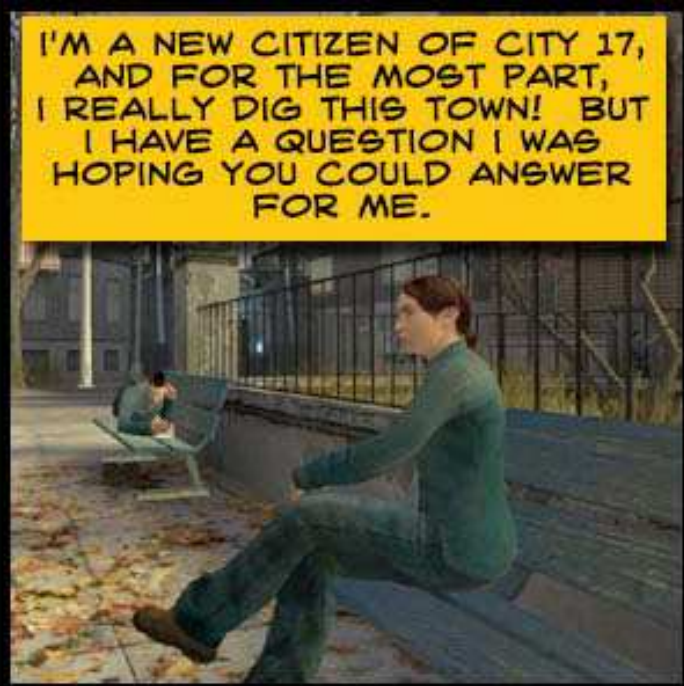




DEAR DR. BREEN,
WHAT UP, DAWG?



I'M A NEW CITIZEN OF CITY 17,
AND FOR THE MOST PART,
I REALLY DIG THIS TOWN! BUT
I HAVE A QUESTION I WAS
HOPING YOU COULD ANSWER
FOR ME.



THERE ARE SOME REALLY
FINE LOOKIN' LADIES IN THIS
CITY, AND YET WHEN I SEE
THEM, I DON'T FEEL ANY...
WELL, FOR LACK OF A
BETTER TERM, **URGES**.
I GOT NO ANGLE ON MY
DANGLE! YOU FEEL ME?



I GUESS MY QUESTION IS THIS:

WHY HAS THE COMBINE
SEEN FIT TO SUPPRESS OUR
REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE?

SINCERELY,
A CONCERNED CITIZEN.



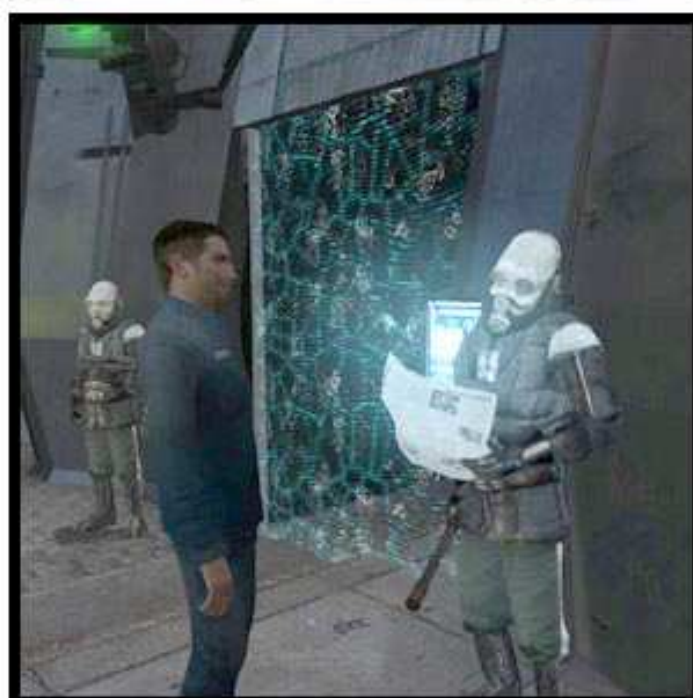
PS: SERIOUSLY! FROHMAN
GOTS TO GET HIS FREAK ON!

PPS: I LOVE YOUR SHOW!
YOU ROCK! TTYL!

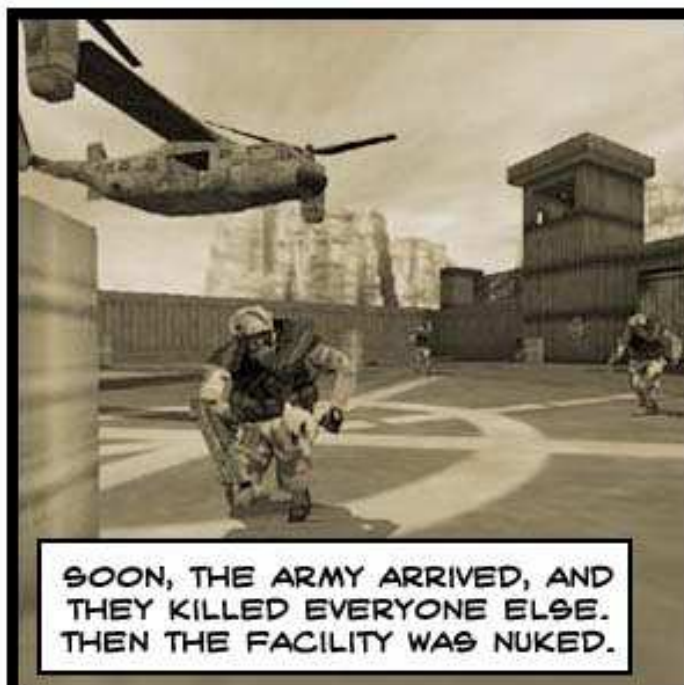
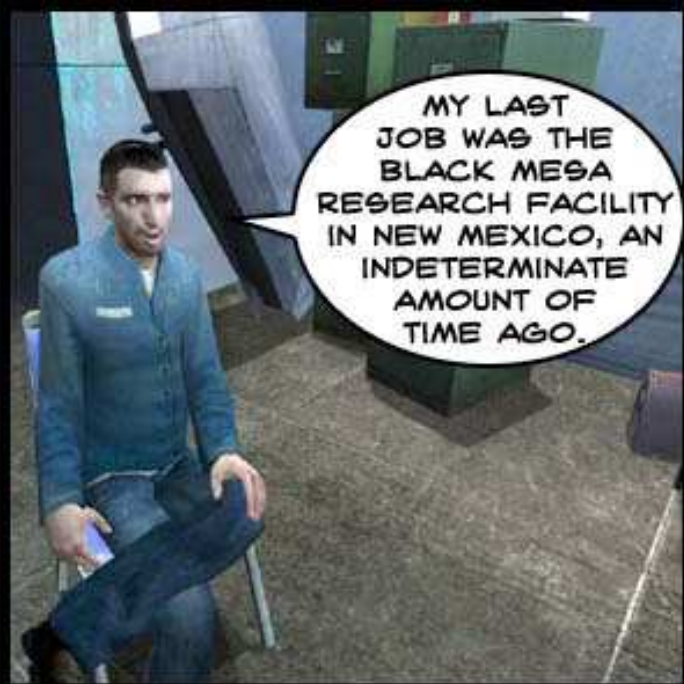


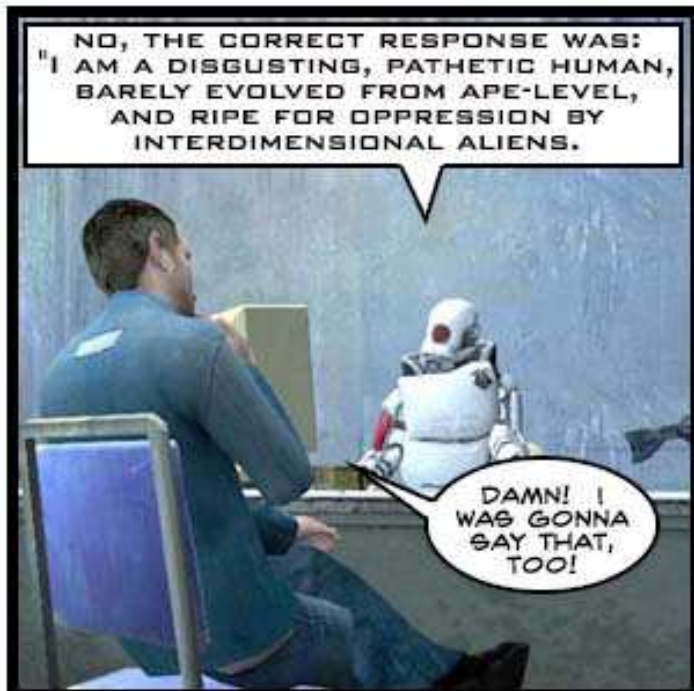
HM.
I WONDER
IF HE EDITS
THESE LETTERS
BEFORE HE
READS THEM
ON THE
AIR.

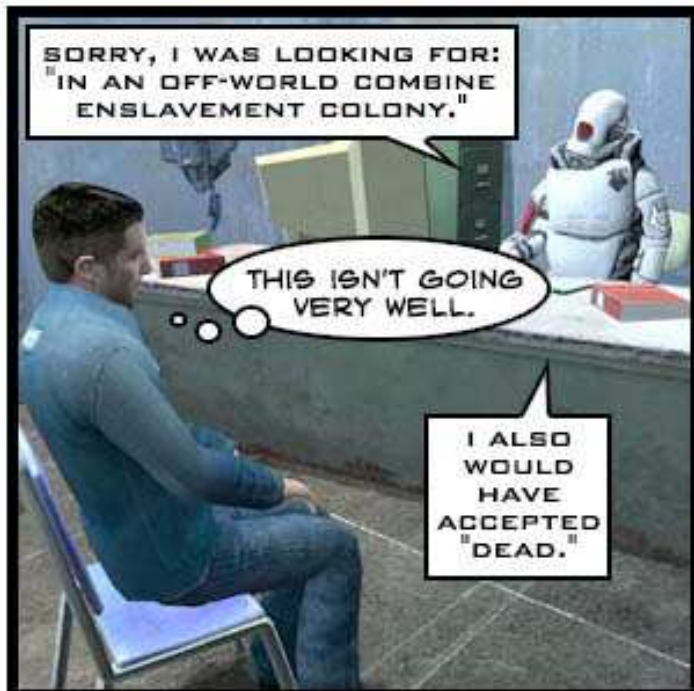
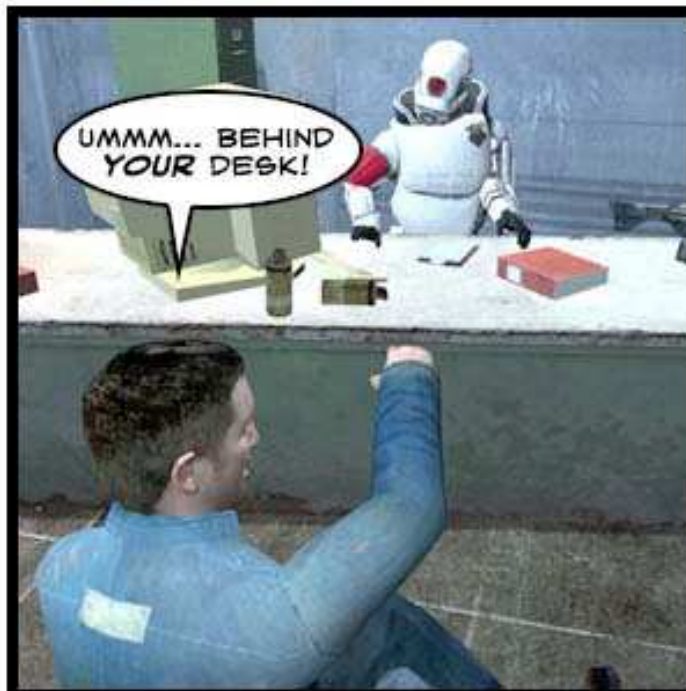
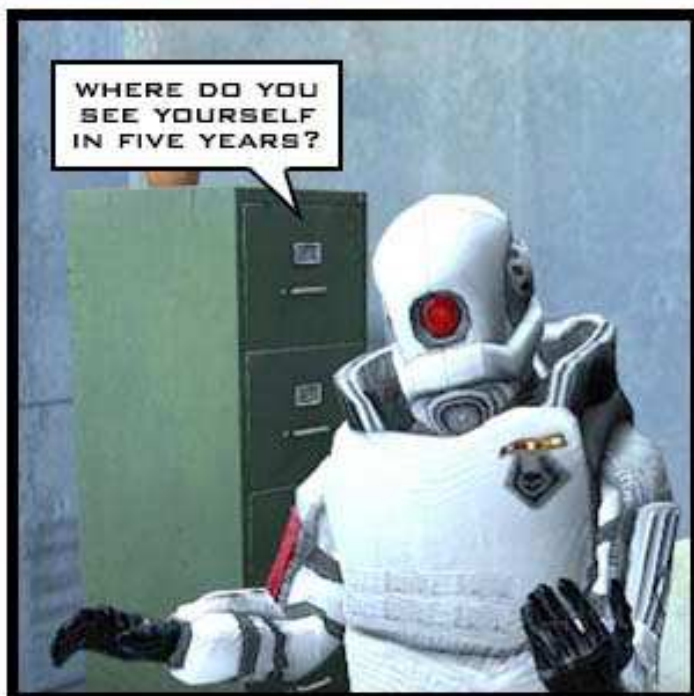


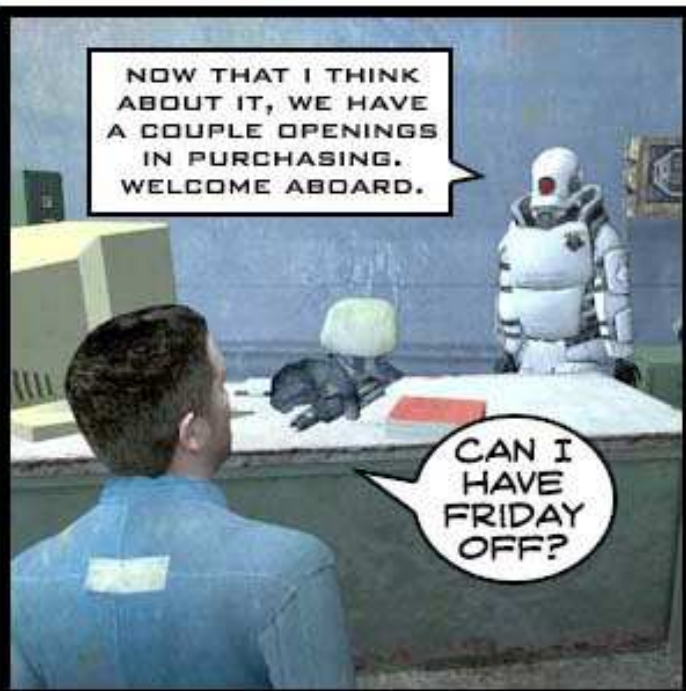












DEAR DR. BREEN,

I JUST STARTED MY NEW JOB AT THE CITADEL! MAYBE I'LL EVEN RUN INTO YOU SOMETIME! ANYWAY, I HAVE A QUESTION YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO ANSWER.



I WAS DOWN IN SUB-BASEMENT 101 A LITTLE WHILE AGO, LOOKING FOR THE EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM, WHEN SUDDENLY...

EEYAGH!
HEADCRABS!



I TRIED TO RUN, BUT I REALIZED I HAD NO STRENGTH IN MY LEGS!



AS I STROLLED SLOWLY AWAY IN SHEER TERROR, I NOTICED MY FLASHLIGHT BATTERY WAS LOW.

SO, MY QUESTION IS THIS:

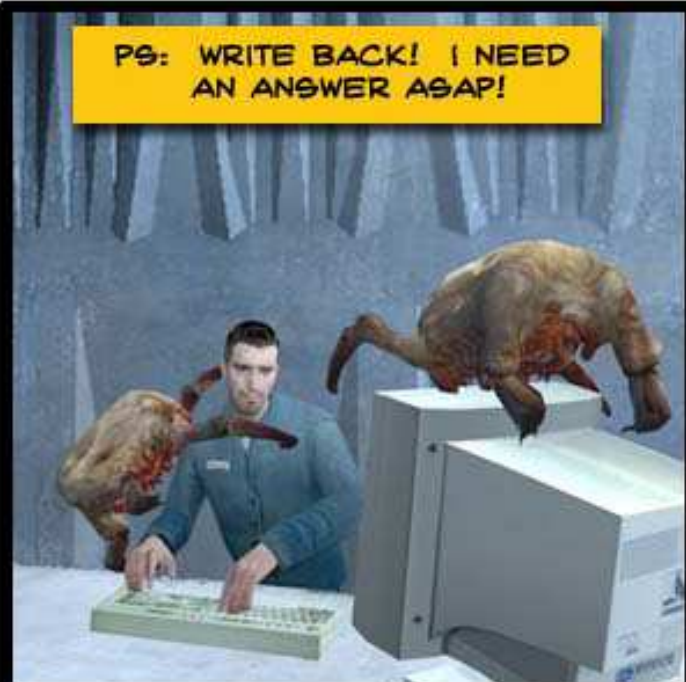


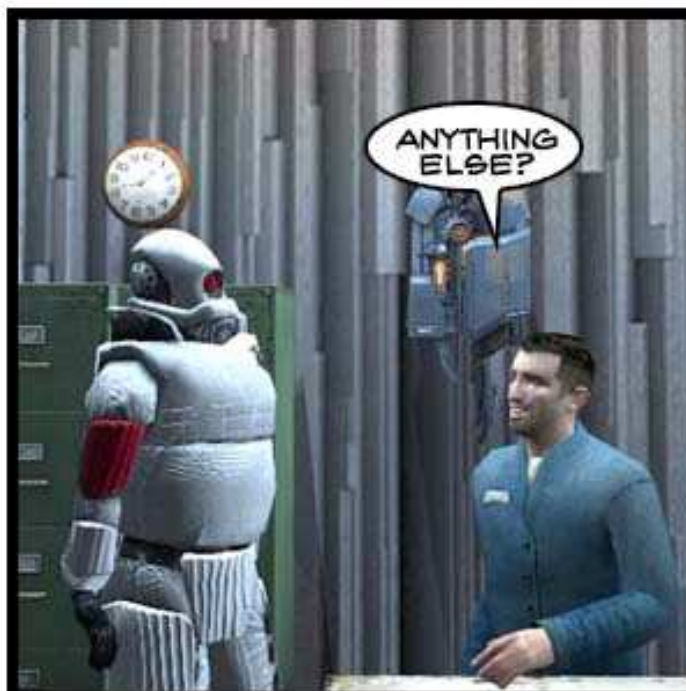
IS MY ABILITY TO SPRINT SOMEHOW TIED TO THE LEVEL OF POWER REMAINING IN MY FLASHLIGHT BATTERY? AND, IF SO, HOW DOES THAT MAKE ANY GODDAMN SENSE?

SINCERELY, A CONCERNED CITIZEN.



PS: WRITE BACK! I NEED AN ANSWER ASAP!

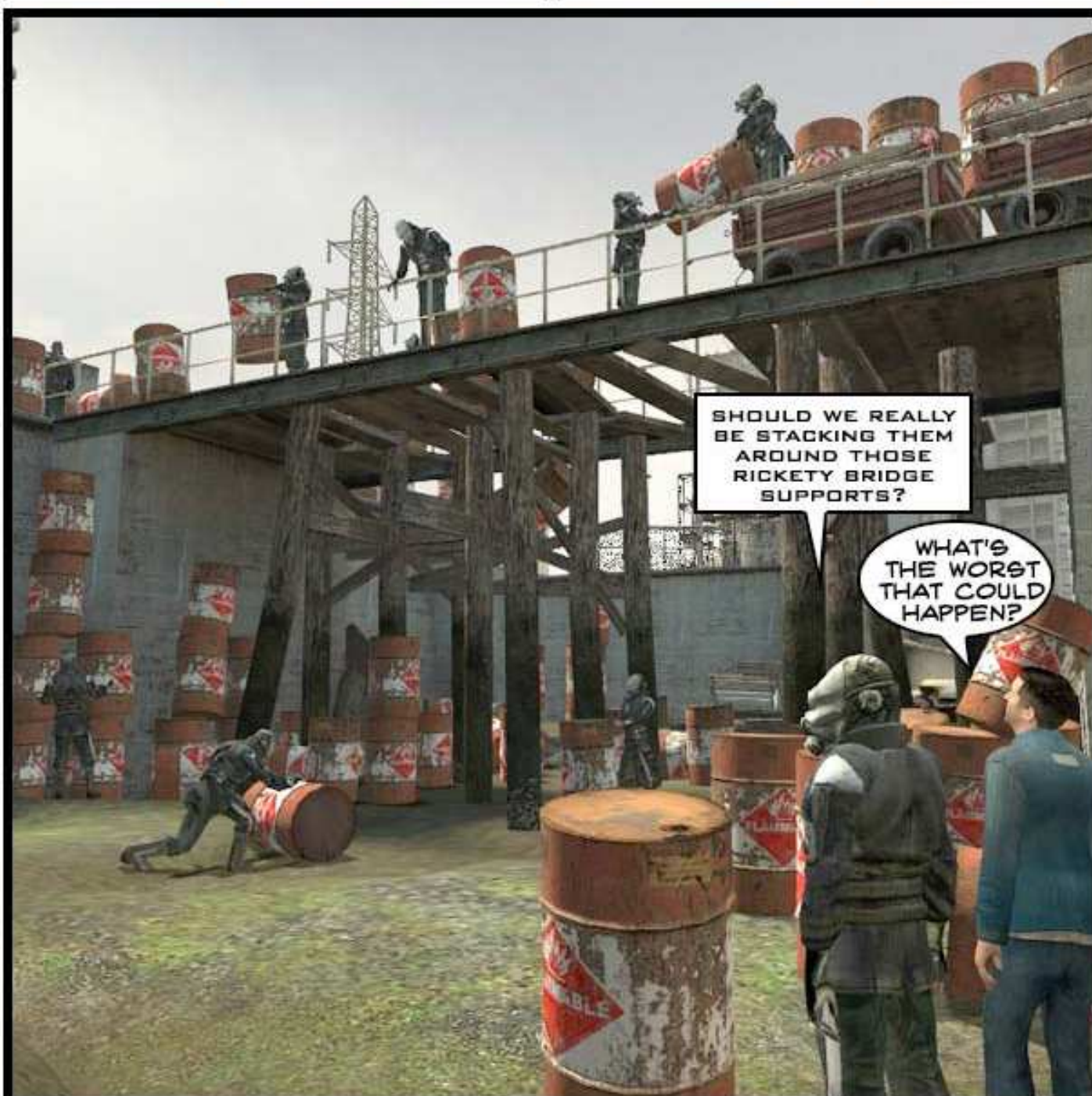




HELLO, DISTRIBUTION? THIS IS
GORDON FROHMAN UP IN
PURCHASING.

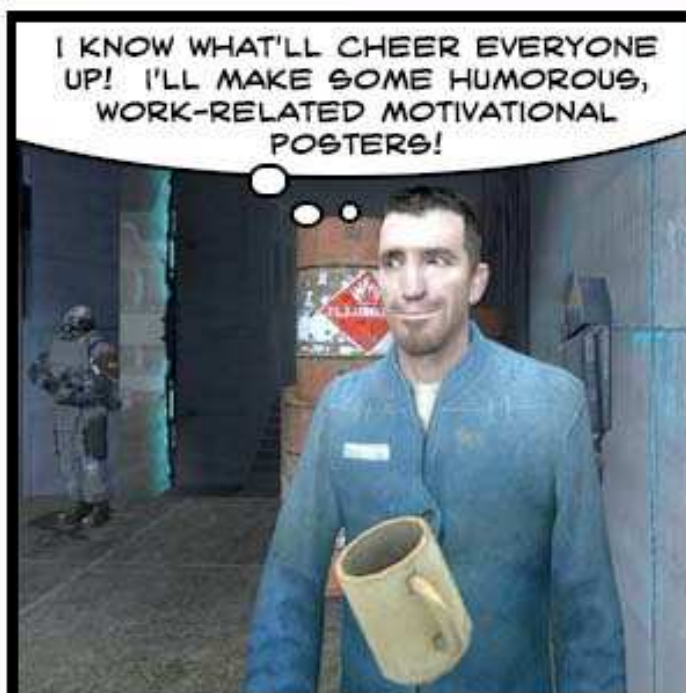


NO, *FROHMAN*.
ANYWAY, SOME IDIOT ORDERED
100,000 EXPLOSIVE BARRELS
AND NOW I HAVE TO FIND A
PLACE TO PUT THEM ALL. CAN
YOU HELP ME OUT?



SHOULD WE REALLY
BE STACKING THEM
AROUND THOSE
RICKETY BRIDGE
SUPPORTS?

WHAT'S
THE WORST
THAT COULD
HAPPEN?



SO, MICHELLE... I KNOW THE
COMBINE SUPPRESSION
FIELD INHIBITS OUR URGE
TO REPRODUCE AND ALL...



...BUT
HOW ABOUT
WE GO OUT
FRIDAY
NIGHT?

FRIDAY
NIGHT I HAVE
MANDATORY
TRASH
DETAIL.



OKAY.
SATURDAY
AFTERNOON?

I PLAN
TO SPEND
ALL DAY
SATURDAY
SOBBING.



SOBBING, GORDON. SOBBING
UNCONTROLLABLY. FOR BEHOLD!
BEHOLD THE GRIM, DISMAL FATE
THAT HAS BEFALLEN HUMANKIND!
SLAVES ARE WE, BRUTALIZED, AND
PUSHED TO THE VERY BRINK OF
EXTINCTION AND ANNIHILATION!
IS THIS THE END? IS IT? IS IT?



SATURDAY
NIGHT?

I'M
DOING
LAUNDRY.



MICHELLE SAID SHE'D BE AT SOME EMPLOYEE SKILLS ENHANCEMENT SEMINAR AT NOVA PROSPEKT ALL WEEKEND. WONDER IF SHE'S BACK.



HEY, MICHELLE!

I ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR PRESENCE, CITIZEN FROHMAN.



HOW WAS NOVA PROSPEKT?

MY TRANS-HUMAN PROCEDURE WAS COMPLETED WITHOUT NOTABLE INCIDENT.



THERE'S SOMETHING... DIFFERENT ABOUT YOU... DID YOU LOSE SOME WEIGHT?

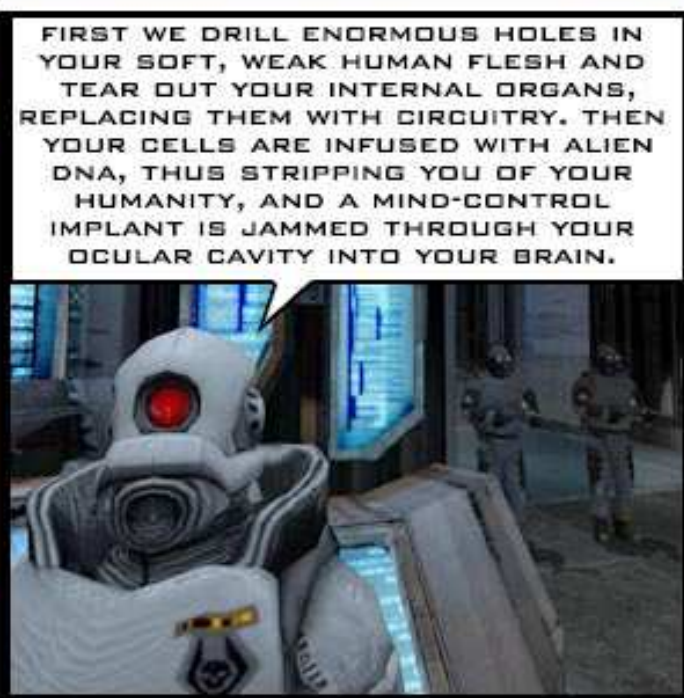
NEGATIVE.

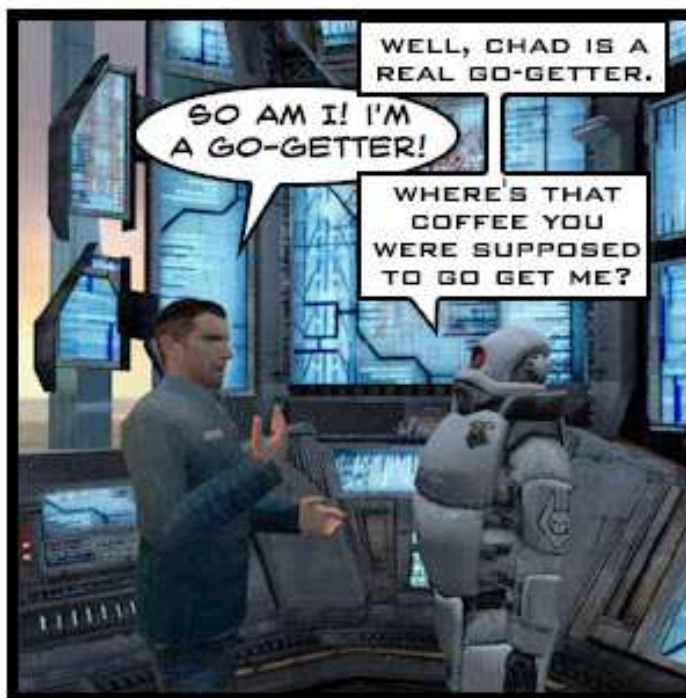


WELL, ANYWAY, GOT PLANS TONIGHT?

I HAVE TO WASH MY HAIR.

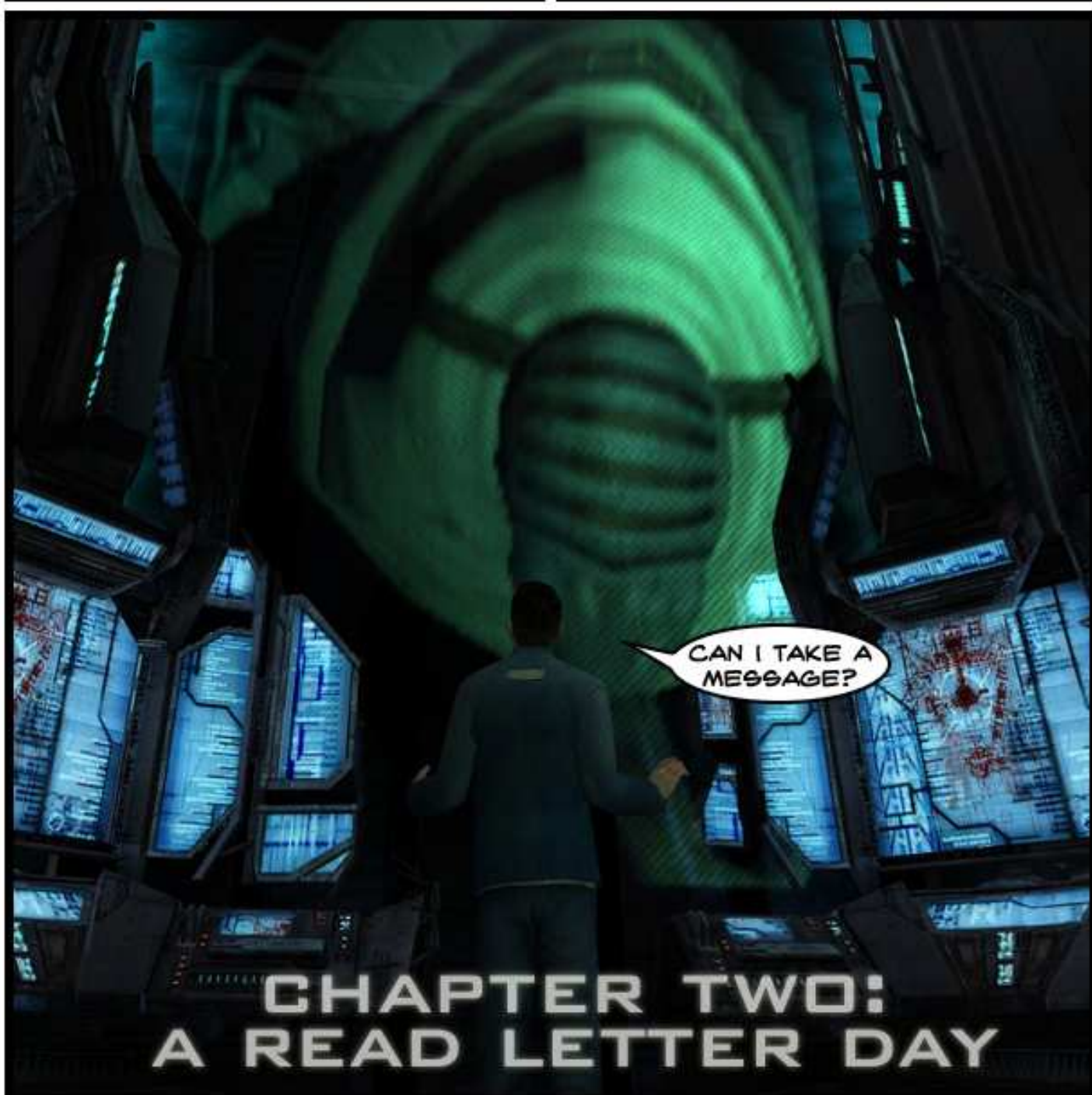






HELLO, AND THANKS FOR
CALLING THE COMBINE
CITADEL! MAY I HELP YOU?

OOH, SORRY, DR. BREEN IS
OUT TO LUNCH AT THE MOMENT.



**CHAPTER TWO:
A READ LETTER DAY**

OKAY, MR. COMBINE ADVISOR, LET ME READ BACK YOUR MESSAGE TO MAKE SURE I'VE GOT IT RIGHT.



"DR. BREEN: CONTINUE DOMINATION OF PLANET EARTH. INCREASE SPAN OF MINING OPERATION TO ACQUIRE EVERY LAST NATURAL RESOURCE. CONVERT OXYGEN ATMOSPHERE TO TRICHO-DIPHOSGENE GAS FOR FULL COMBINE COLONIZATION."



"CONTINUE SURGICAL PROCEDURES ON HUMANS TO CONVERT THEM TO OBEDIENT ALIEN HYBRID SOLDIERS AND SLAVES."



"FEED REMAINING HUMANS THE HARVESTED ORGANS OF THE DEAD."

"CRUSH ALL RESISTANCE WITH NO MERCY."

"KILL ALL HUMANS WHO REBEL."



"SUBVERT. DESTROY. CRUSH. CONTROL. RULE."



OKAY! WHAT'S A GOOD TIME FOR HIM TO GIVE YOU A CALL BACK?



LET'S SEE... TV LISTINGS... LOOKS
LIKE AN "I SPY" MARATHON IS ON
TONIGHT...

HEY!
DOCTOR
BREEN!

JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW I'M
OFF TO NOVA PROSPEKT FOR MY
COMBINE SURGERY! SEEYA!

ALSO,
SOME EVIL
ALIEN SLUG CALLED
ABOUT SOMETHING
OR OTHER.
LATER!

SECURITY? A MAN SUDDENLY
APPEARED IN MY OFFICE WITH
NO WARNING. AND I'M ALL BUT
CERTAIN IT WAS...

GORDON
FROHMAN!

...SOME IDIOT
I'VE NEVER SEEN
BEFORE.

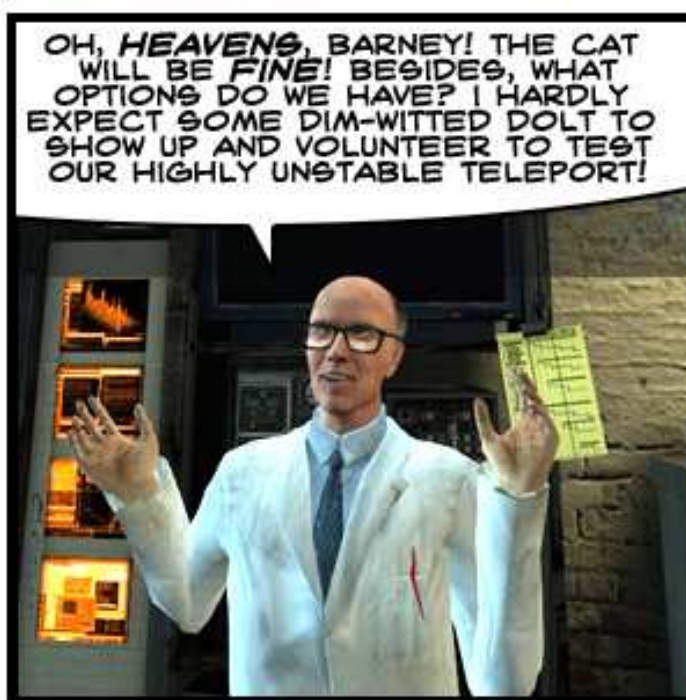




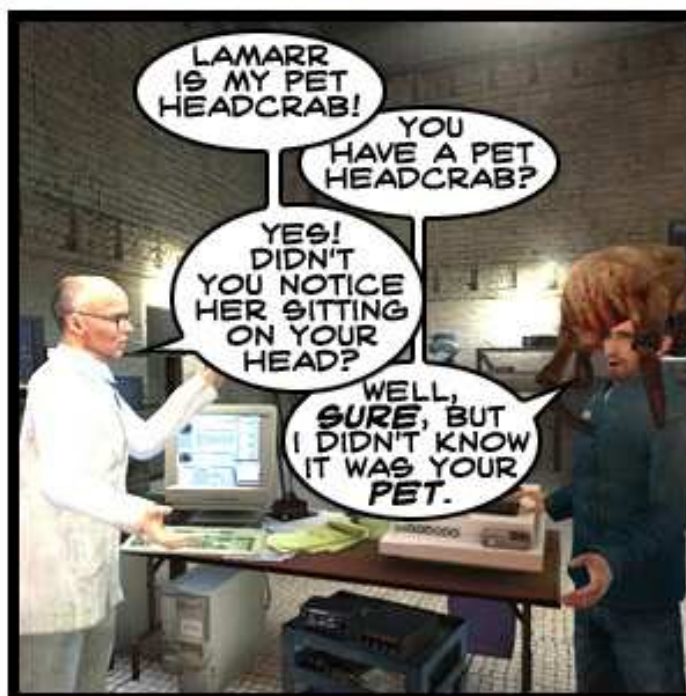




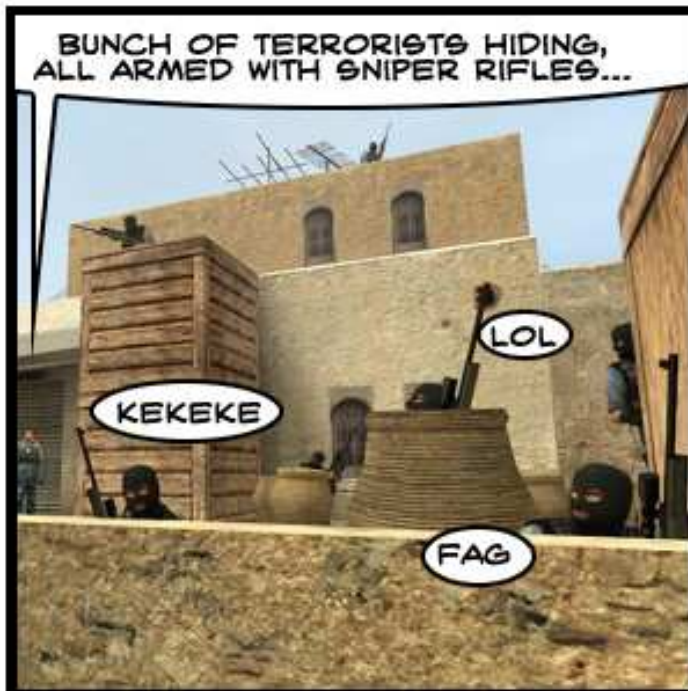


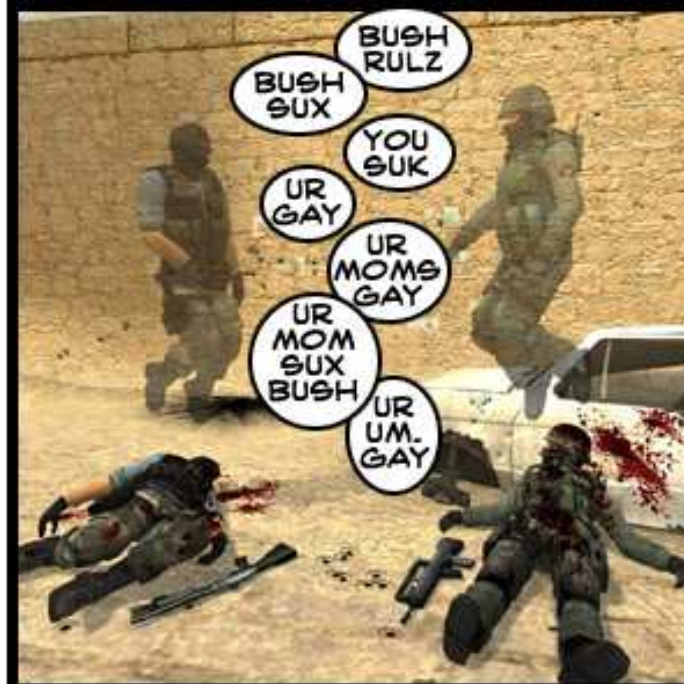




























Congratulations on finding this fortuitously placed Medkit! We here at "Heal-U-Kwik" Industries have a simple philosophy:



Manufacture the finest Medkits money can buy and then scatter them around dangerous areas of war-torn cities to be found and used by injured adventurers at no actual cost to themselves!



Instructions for use: Simply touch, pick up, or walk over Medkit. Doing so will heal most types of injuries, including bullet wounds, zombie slashes, antlion gouges, grenade shrapnel, and even self-inflicted damage caused by careless falls off ledges and catwalks (Note: falls from large bridges can be fatal!) Our patented technology will even remove pesky bloodstains from your clothing and body... instantly!



Talk to your doctor before using Medkit. Side-effects may include blurred vision and inflated sense of invulnerability. This Medkit is also Eco-Friendly and will completely and instantly biodegrade upon use.





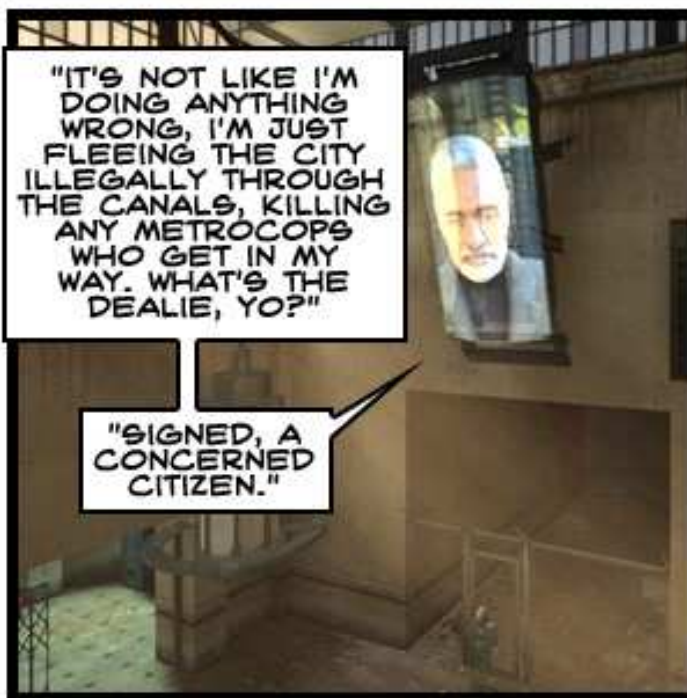


KLONK



KLONK











UM, GORDON? REMEMBER THAT TALK WE HAD ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FLYING ROBOTS THAT TAKE YOUR PICTURE, AND THE ONES THAT SHRED YOUR BODY WITH A BUNCH OF ROTATING BLADES?



SORTA!



DON'T FEEL BAD. I'M SURE YOU'LL GET IT NEXT TIME.

OW. IS ALL THIS BLOOD GONNA SHOW UP IN THE PICTURES?

OR NOT.



I HAVE TO DITCH THIS IDIOT BEFORE HE GETS ME KILLED. BUT I'VE GOT TO DO IT NICELY OR HIS FEELINGS WILL BE HURT. THINK, SANDY, THINK!



OKAY, I'LL JUST SAY, "GORDON, I THINK IT'S TIME WE SPLIT UP AND WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS." NO, NO, I CAN'T SAY "SPLIT UP" OR HE'LL THINK WE'VE BEEN DATING ALL THIS TIME, AND THEN HE'LL CRY...



I'VE GOT IT! I'LL SAY, "GORDON, I'M JUST SLOWING YOU DOWN. WHY DON'T YOU GO ON AHEAD WITHOUT ME?" PERFECT! THAT FLATTERS HIM AND MAKES ME LOOK LIKE I CARE ABOUT HIM!



SANDY! SANDY! THERE YOU ARE! QUICK, PULL THIS PIPE OUT OF MY MIDSECTION! IT GOT STUCK THERE WHEN I ACCIDENTALLY SHOT MYSELF IN THE HIP AND THEN FELL OFF A LEDGE!



AND... THE ORNATE AXE IN YOUR HEAD?

OH, LEAVE THAT IN. IT TAKES MY MIND OFF MY BROKEN LEG.



I'M DITCHING YOU, IDIOT, BEFORE YOU GET ME KILLED.

AT LEAST I THINK IT'S BROKEN. OR DID IT ALWAYS BEND THIS WAY?



YOU WANT TO ABANDON ME? **FINE.**
MAYBE I SHOULD SCOUT AHEAD
FOR A SAFE PATH FOR YOU TO
ABANDON ME ON. FOR WHEN YOU
ABANDON ME. YOU ABANDONER.



OH, WHATEVER.
SCOUT AHEAD IF
YOU WANT. I'LL JUST
WAIT HERE.

HEH HEH. GORDON, YOU DEVIL! THIS
SELFLESS ACT WILL NO DOUBT
CONVINCE HER TO STAY WITH YOU!
MAYBE EVEN MARRY YOU! HEE!



HM?

OH!

BARNAC--
LLLGHHH!



LOOKS
CLEAR TO
THE EAST...

GORD--
GKKK!

SAFE TO
THE WEST...



WELL, I'VE
BRAVELY SCOUTED
AHEAD! EVERYTHING
LOOKS SAFE
AND--

HM.
GUESS
SHE SPLIT
ALREADY.

SANDY?



AH WELL.

HER LOSS.

BURRRP.



OOH, THIS AIRBOAT COULD BE JUST THE THING I NEED TO TRAVEL THE RIVER OF TOXIC GLOP AHEAD!



GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR! I NOTICED YOU ADMIRING OUR AIRBOAT! WELL, TRUST ME, SIR, YOU DO NOT WANT THIS VEHICLE. IT'S USED, IT'S LOUD, AND IT DOESN'T COME WITH A WARRANTY. PLUS, ONLY ONE SEAT!



I CAN, HOWEVER, OFFER YOU THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN PERSONAL OCCUPANT-PROPELLED OPEN-AIR SEMI-BUOYANT WATERCRAFT! I'D REALLY LOVE TO SEE YOU FLOAT OUT OF HERE TODAY IN THIS BEAUTY!



WELL, I AM A FAN OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS... HOW DOES IT, UM... YOU KNOW... GO?

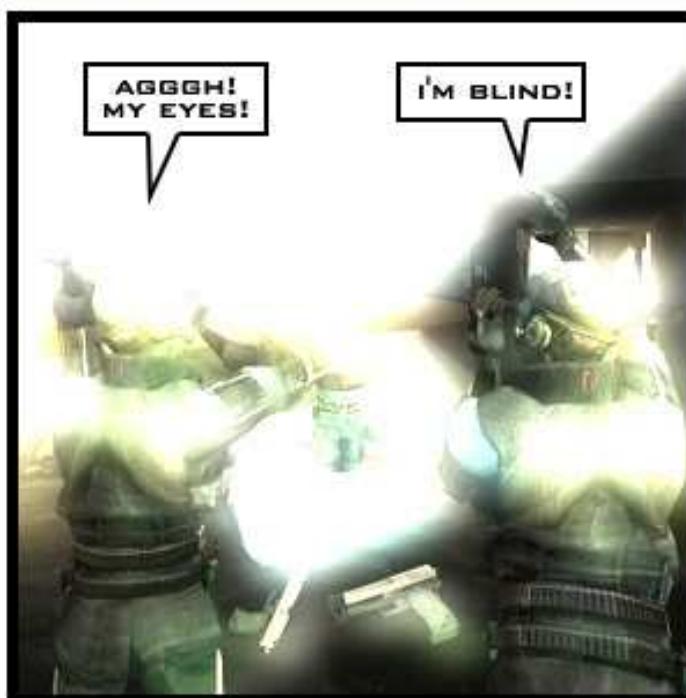
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED!



MAN, THIS CLIENT-ENABLED MOISTURE-RESISTANT WATERCRAFT-PROPULSION DEVICE IS KINDA HEAVY.



CHAPTER FOUR:
WATER HAPHAZARD



OKAY, GANG. REPORTS INDICATE THAT THERE'S A REBEL COMING DOWN THE CANALS IN A BOAT. LET'S GET READY.



RICHARD, THOMAS, PETER, I WANT YOU UP ON THE BRIDGE. WHEN HIS BOAT COMES ALONG, RAPPEL DOWN IN FRONT OF IT ON ROPES, NO MATTER HOW FAST IT'S GOING. YOU GOT THAT?



STUART, ANTHONY, KESHAWN, FIND SOME RICKETY WOODEN WALKWAYS AND GET ON TOP OF THEM. AND WHEN I SAY RICKETY, I MEAN RICKETY. THE SLIGHTEST IMPACT SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMPLETELY KNOCK THEM DOWN.



THE REST OF YOU FAN OUT AT REGULAR INTERVALS. ANY QUESTIONS?



YES, STEPHANIE?

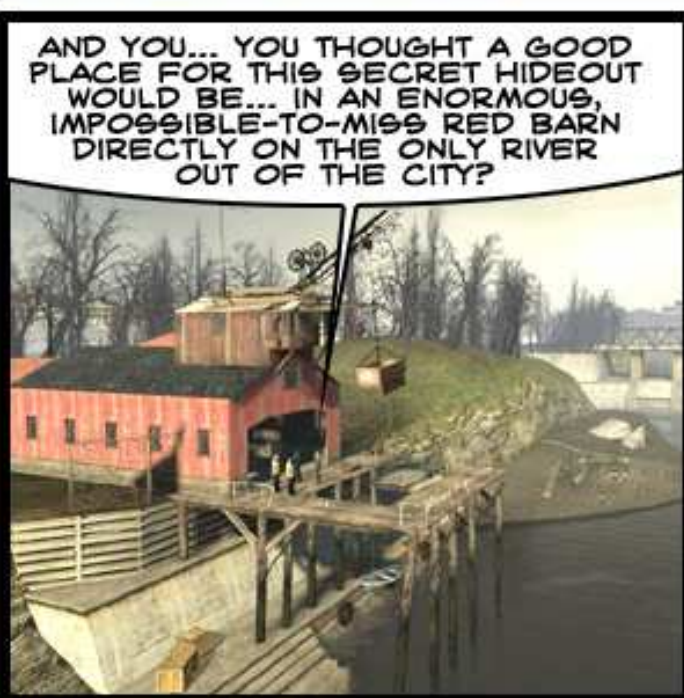


EXPLOSIVE BARRELS... SHOULD WE CLUSTER AROUND THEM?

EXCELLENT QUESTION. YES, YES, AND YES.



TEACHER'S PET.







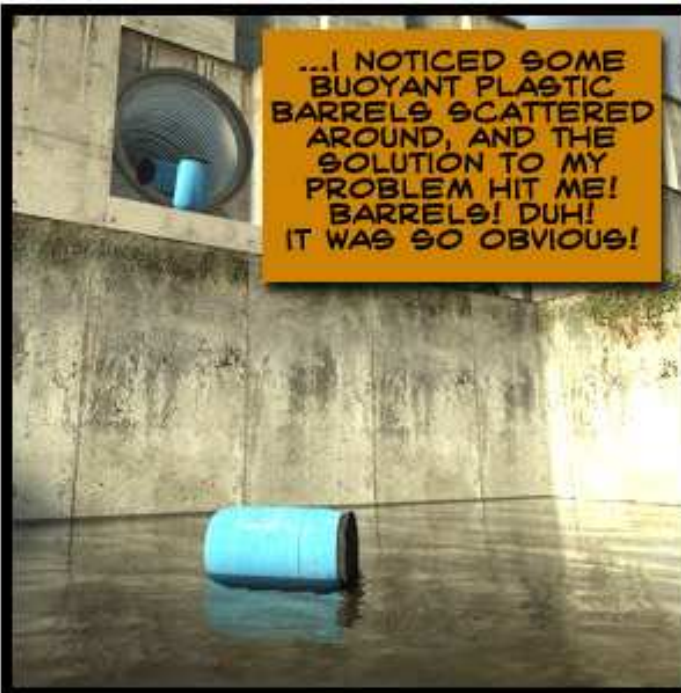
DEAR DR. BREEN,
JUST THOUGHT I'D WRITE TO LET
YOU KNOW I'M UP THE CREEK
WITHOUT A PADDLE! BUT I'VE
GOT A SHOVEL! HA HA HA!



ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO TELL YOU
ABOUT THIS SITUATION I FOUND
MYSELF IN. THERE WAS THIS WALL I
NEEDED TO GET MY BOAT OVER,
JUST PAST A RAMP IN THE WATER.
THE RAMP WAS FLOATING TOO
LOW FOR ME TO USE, BUT THEN...



...I NOTICED SOME
BUOYANT PLASTIC
BARRELS SCATTERED
AROUND, AND THE
SOLUTION TO MY
PROBLEM HIT ME!
BARRELS! DUH!
IT WAS SO OBVIOUS!



AFTER ALL, WHO KNOWS MORE
ABOUT BARRELS THAN ME?
SIGNED, A CONCERNED CITIZEN.



P.S. I DIDN'T MAKE IT OVER THE
FIRST TIME, BUT MY SHOVEL FLEW
ABOUT FOUR HUNDRED YARDS!





THAT CHOPPER PILOT BETTER THANK ME FOR PICKING UP ALL THE STUFF HE DROPPED. NOW, WHAT TO DO WITH IT? CAN'T REALLY PADDLE WITH ALL THE EXTRA WEIGHT.



AND GAD! THAT INCESSANT BEEPING! MAKES ME FEEL LIKE MY HEAD IS GONNA JUST EXPLO--



BA-BOOSH







THIS MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE, OFFICER XJL-0079, BUT IT SEEMS I'VE... WELL, I'VE GROWN RATHER FOND OF YOU.

PLEASE, SIR... CALL ME GERALD.



I DON'T WANT TO SHOOT THOSE COPS TO DEATH WHILE THEY'RE HAVING A MOMENT... BECAUSE I'M REALLY BORED WITH ALWAYS USING THIS PISTOL. LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE I'VE GOT IN YE OLDE INVENTORY.



MY TRADEMARK SHOVEL? KINDA MESSY.



HUH. I DON'T EVEN RECALL PICKING THIS UP.



AND WHY AM I STILL LUGGING ONE OF THESE AROUND?



GERALD? DID YOU JUST HEAR SOMETHING GO BA-BOOM?

JUST MY HEART, SIR.

JUST MY HEART.



MY STORY? IT'S NOTHING SPECIAL.

JUST A SIMPLE TALE...

OF INCREDIBLE BRAVERY...

AND UNMATCHED HEROISM...

THE COMBINE OUTNUMBERED
ME A HUNDRED TO ONE...

SO THE ODDS WERE
ALMOST EVEN...

ALMOST.

SOME WERE NOT STRONG
ENOUGH FOR THE JOURNEY...

DON'T
LEAVE ME,
GORDON!
I LOVE
YOU!

YOU'RE
JUST SLOWING
ME DOWN,
SANDY.

CASUALTIES OF WAR...

CASUALTIES OF LOVE.

AND UPON MY ARRIVAL HERE...

A HERO'S WELCOME.

IF YOU
MUST.

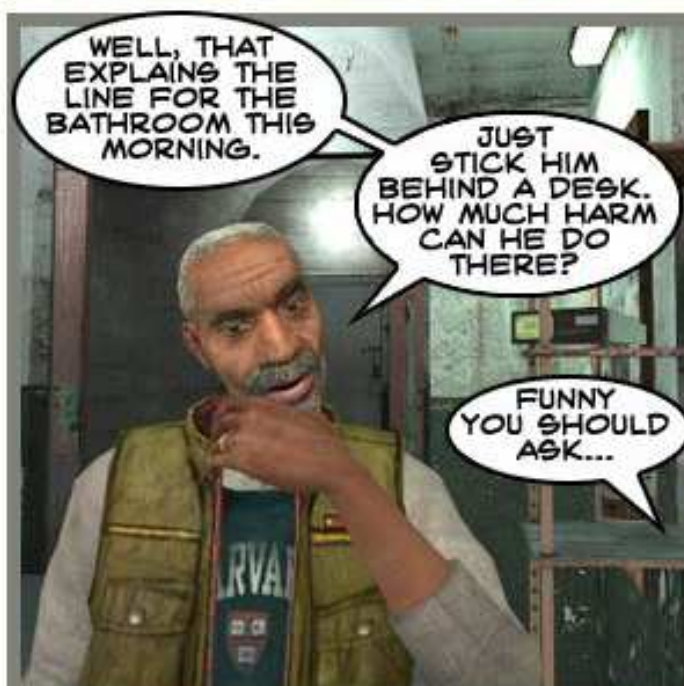
YOU'RE
SO BRAVE!
LET ME KISS
YOU! WITH MY
MOUTH!

PLUS, SMOOCHING WITH SOME
CHICK IN A TIGHT SWEATER.

HE JUST
STAGGERED IN,
CRYING AND BLEEDING,
AND FAINTED.

NNNGHH...
A MASSAGE,
TOO? OKAY...
MMMHH...

CHAPTER FIVE: BLACK MESA GUEST



WATCHING TV? HEY, MIND IF I SWITCH OVER TO DR. BREEN'S SHOW?



THESE ARE SECURITY CAMERAS. NO OUTSIDE FEED.

AH, TOO BAD. I HAVEN'T SEEN DR. BREEN'S SHOW IN AGES. HEH, HE'S ALWAYS, LIKE, "SUPPRESS YOUR INSTINCTS! OBEY!" HEH. IT'S GREAT. YOU KNOW HOW HE IS...



WHAT? WHAT? I DON'T KNOW DR. BREEN! WHO TOLD YOU I KNOW HIM? I DON'T! I'VE NEVER MET HIM! I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF HIM! I DON'T SLEEP WITH A PICTURE OF HIM UNDER MY PILLOW!



OKAY, JUDITH. SLIGHT OVERREACTION THERE. WAY TOO MUCH COFFEE THIS MORNING. CALM DOWN. EASY. DID HE NOTICE? HE'S STARING. HE NOTICED! YOU BLEW IT! CRISIS, JUDITH, CRISIS!



YOU HAVE A PILLOW?

OKAY. CRISIS OVER.

DO YOU HAVE A BED, TOO? 'COS I'VE BEEN SLEEPING IN THE BATHROOM BEHIND THE TOILET!

















FROHMAN, PLEASE, YOU DON'T NEED TO APOLOGIZE. **EVERYONE** GOES THROUGH A PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT WHEN THEY GET HERE, AFTER THE OPPRESSIVE NATURE OF CITY 17.



GRANTED, **MOST** PEOPLE DON'T BUILD THEIR OWN CITADEL OUT OF CRATES IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN...

...NOR THEIR OWN BREEN VIDEO PROPAGANDA TOWERS.

...AND STAY TUNED FOR "CITY 17'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS". TONIGHT, TWENTY-TWO ARE KILLED WHEN A SLUM COLLAPSES. WELL, I THINK IT'S FUNNY, ANYWAY.



AND NO ONE HAS EVER BUILT THEIR OWN FULLY OPERATIONAL STRIDER. BUT YOU'RE MAKING PROGRESS! I MEAN, YOU NEVER ACTUALLY TURNED IT ON!

HEH, YEAH. 'COS IF I HAD, IT'D BE ALL "STOMP STOMP STOMP" AND YOU'D BE ALL "AAGGGH! HELP!" AND IT'D BE ALL "BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA" AND YOU'D BE ALL "IT'S KILLING ME!" AND IT'D BE ALL "STAB-YOU-THROUGH-CHEST-WITH-FOOT!" AND YOU'D BE ALL "OH NO I'M DEAD!" HEH HEH. THAT'D BE AWESOME.



I MEAN **BAD!** THAT'D BE **BAD!**

GOOD SAVE. BUT WE GOTTA TRIM THOSE PAUSES DOWN A BIT.











WELL, GREAT GOING, FROHMAN. YOU BUILT A BUNCH OF DEADLY TRAPS IN OUR PEACEFUL TOWN. YOU'VE TURNED RAVENHOLM INTO SOME SORT OF... OF...

TRAPTOWN!



LAZLO AND I ARE GONNA TAKE OUR CHANCES ON THE COAST. JUST TELL US HOW TO GET OUT OF TOWN SAFELY. ARE THERE ANY CARS POISED TO DROP ON US IF WE GO THIS WAY?



MMMIGHT BE A FEW.

HOW ABOUT *THIS* WAY?

NOPE! NO CARS.

SO IT'S SAFE?

DEPENDS.

ON?



WELL, WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS **COMPLETELY** FIRE RESISTANT...

...OR JUST **EXTREMELY** FIRE RESISTANT?



MY GOD. YOU... YOU'RE WORSE THAN THE **COMBINE**.

OH! THAT IS **SO** SWEET!

FIRE RESISTANT? I CAN'T EVEN HAVE SALSA!



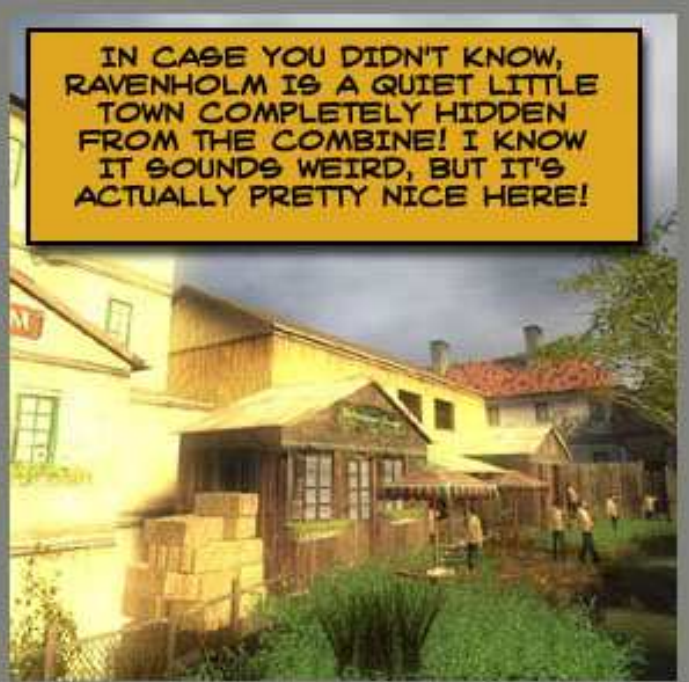


DEAR DR. BREEN,

WHAT'S NEW? THOUGHT I'D LET YOU
KNOW I MADE IT TO RAVENHOLM!
(I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WORRIED.)



IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW,
RAVENHOLM IS A QUIET LITTLE
TOWN COMPLETELY HIDDEN
FROM THE COMBINE! I KNOW
IT SOUNDS WEIRD, BUT IT'S
ACTUALLY PRETTY NICE HERE!



AFTER A FEW MISUNDERSTANDINGS
WITH THE LOCALS, I'M FINALLY
STARTING TO FIT IN. I'VE EVEN
STARTED DRESSING LIKE THEM!



MY LANDLORD IS A BIT WEIRD, BUT
HE'S LETTING ME DO OFFICE WORK
IN EXCHANGE FOR LIVING RENT-FREE.



YOU
ORDERED
HOW MANY GIANT
CIRCULAR SAW
BLADES?

RELAX.
SOMEONE'LL
USE 'EM.

ANYHOO, JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW
HOW GREAT THINGS ARE GOING! I'M
VERY HAPPY AND CAN'T IMAGINE
ANYTHING EVER CHANGING THAT, EVER.



SIGNED,
A COMPLETELY
UNCONCERNED CITIZEN

BOMB
THE SHIT
OUT OF
THEM.

DONE AND DONE!

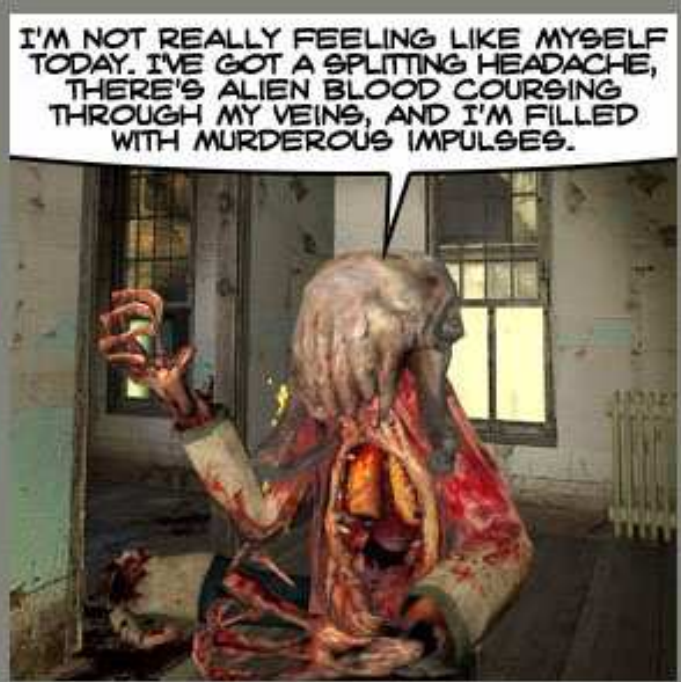
























SO, A COUPLE COMBINE SNIPERS ARE GUARDING THE TRAINYARDS, EH? WELL, THANKS TO THAT ARTICLE I READ IN "PC GAME INHABITANT" MAGAZINE, I KNOW SEVERAL WAYS OF DEALING WITH SNIPERS...



#1: DISTRACTION! WHILE BEHIND COVER, HOLD OUT AN OBJECT TO DRAW THEIR FIRE. ONCE THEY WASTE A BULLET, RUN BEFORE THEY CHAMBER ANOTHER!



THAT'S IT... TAKE THE BAIT...

#2: EVASION! RUN, JUMP, AND WHILE JUMPING, CROUCH IN MID-AIR! REPEAT!



CAN'T GET A SHOT! HE MUST HAVE MILITARY TRAINING!

HOO!
HAH! HOO!
NUH!

#3: PATIENCE! OUT-LAST 'EM! THEY'LL EVENTUALLY GET BORED AND LEAVE, OR DIE OF NATURAL CAUSES!



AARGH! MY CHOLESTEROL!

THAT'S WHY I'M A VEGETARIAN!

#4: TRICKERY! THERE'S NOTHING MORE SATISFYING THAN OUTSMARTING YOUR OPPONENT!



HIT 'ALT-F4' TO ENABLE GOD MODE!

OOH, OKAY! I'LL--

sniper_01 has left the game

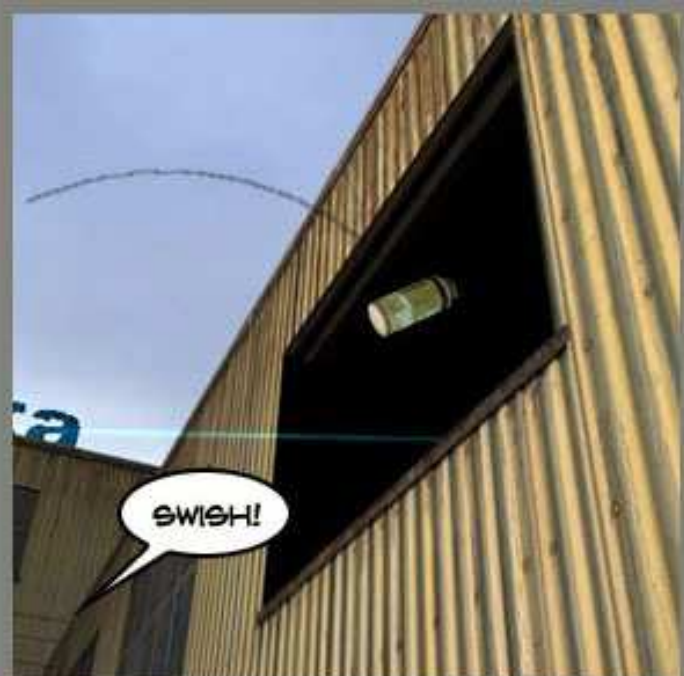
#5: DISGUISE! OR, AS I LIKE TO CALL IT, "CARDBOARD GEAR SOLID!"



I THOUGHT THERE WAS A REBEL RUNNING AROUND DOWN THERE! BUT IT'S JUST A BOX!

UH. RUNNING AROUND DOWN THERE.

I THINK I'LL JUST GO WITH THE CLASSIC "GRENADE IN THE NEST" METHOD FOR THIS ONE, THOUGH...



SWISH!



HM.
THAT'S
ODD.



HEY!
WHERE'S THE
BOOM AND YOUR
CORPSE ALL
FLOPPING
OUT?

WELL, IT HELPS
IF YOU PULL THE
PIN FIRST, GENIUS.

OH, I'M SO
EMBARRASSED.



THAT
WAS KINDA
MY LAST GRENADE,
TOO... ANY CHANCE I
COULD HAVE IT
BACK?

I DON'T
SEE WHY
NOT.



HA! NOW,
THIS TIME I'LL...
WAIT, THERE IS
NO PIN IN THIS
GRENADE.

MY MISTAKE.

BIP
BIP
BIP



**ZAKKA ZAKKA ZAKKA
ZAKKA ZAKKA ZAKKA!**

DOOT-DOOT DOOT-DOOT
VEET! VEET!
DOOT-DOOT
VEET! VEET! VEET!

DOOM-TICKA-DOOM-TICKA
DOOM-TICKA-DOOM-TICKA
DOOM-TICKA-DOOM-TICKA



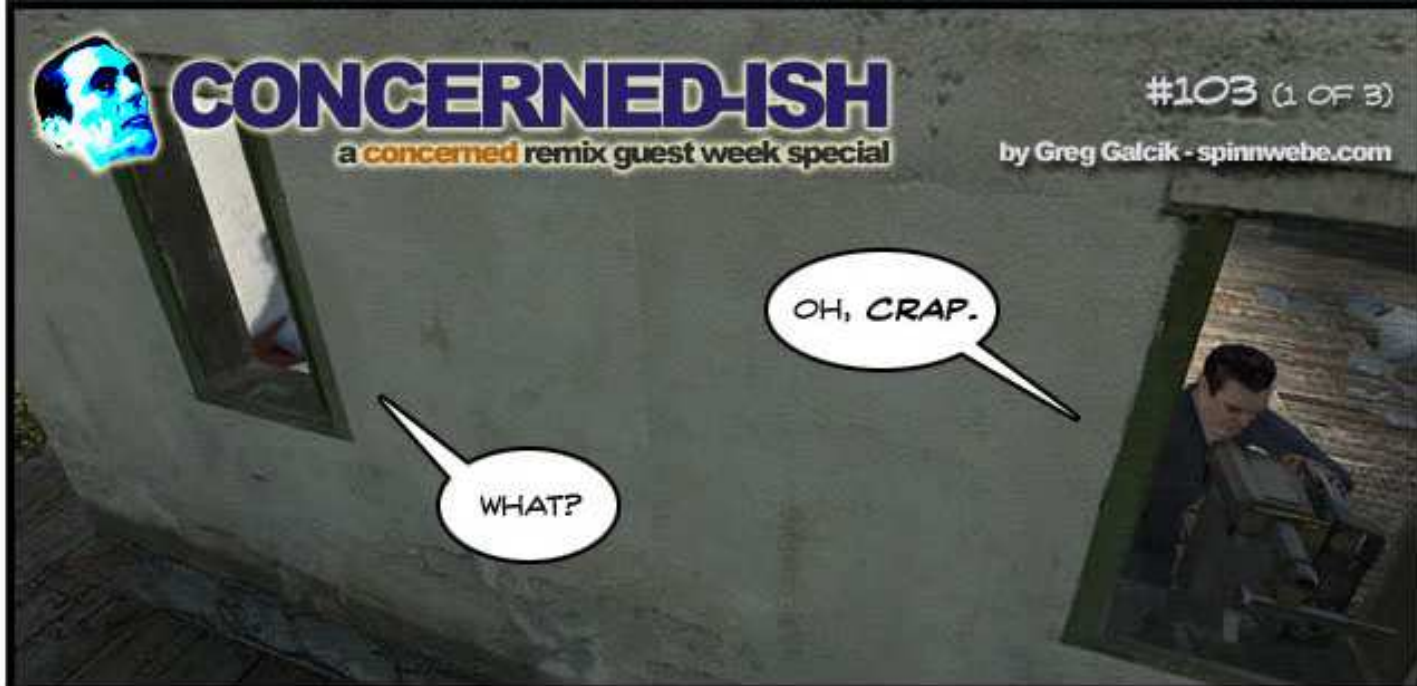


CONCERNED-ISH

a **concerned** remix guest week special

#103 (1 OF 3)

by Greg Galcik - spinrwebe.com



THEY GAVE HIM TWO LEVELS JUST FOR BEING THE RIGHT LUCKY BASTARD IN THE WRONG PLACE. AND HE PRACTICALLY **BRAGS** ABOUT IT.

OVER HIS HEAD THIS TIME, THOUGH. GONNA CRASH AND BURN, I'M TELLING YOU.
KNOCK ON WOOD.

UH...AND WHO'S TWELVE, NOW?

HOW COULD YOU **POSSIBLY** MISS A NAME LIKE "**TWELVE**"? I SWEAR TO **GOD** IF YOU GET ANY DUMBER I'M GONNA THROW YOU INTO ORBIT.

OKAY!
SORRY!
GEEZ!

HE'S THE ONE WHO HANGS OUT NEAR COPIERS AND IN EMPTY MEETING ROOMS AND THINGS...AND WHEN YOU SHOW UP, HE SMIRKS LIKE HE WAS EXPECTING YOU, THEN WALKS AWAY WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING.

CREEPY DORK.
VOICE PROBLEM.

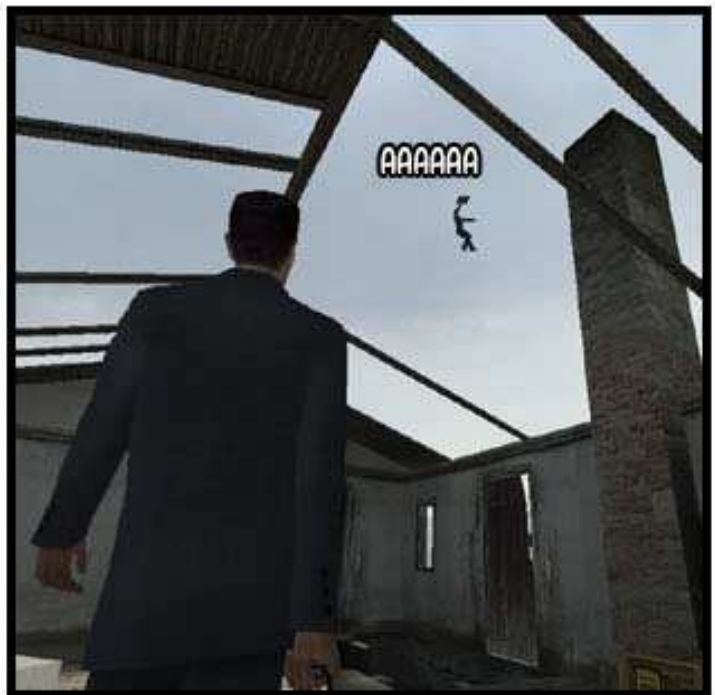
MM...DOESN'T RING A BELL...

OH COME ON. HE'S THE...HE...

IT SEEMS YOUR DIVISION HAS OOVER-EXTENDED, ITSELF?
I'M AFRAID WE'LL...
SCCKKKKKRRRKT...
HAVE TO RE-VIEW YOURRR BUDGET FOR NEXT QUARTERRRR.

OH, HIM!







DEAR DR. BREEN,
SORRY I HAVEN'T WRITTEN YOU IN
ALMOST TWO WHOLE DAYS! I'M
SURE YOU'VE BEEN WORRIED.



I'VE DECIDED NOT TO LIVE IN
RAVENHOLM. THE DAILY COMMUTE
TO CITY 17 WOULD BE A BEAR.
PLUS, I REALLY DIDN'T CARE
FOR THE NIGHT LIFE.



ANYWAY, I REALIZED THAT ONCE I
GET MY COMBINE SURGERY DONE
AT NOVA PROSPEKT, I CAN JUST
LIVE IN THE CITADEL, RIGHT?



IF I'D THOUGHT ABOUT THAT
SOONER, I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD
TO GO TO RAVENHOLM AT ALL!



BY THE WAY, ANY PLANS TO DO
SOME RE-PAVING OUT HERE? THE
ROADS ARE REALLY BUMPY!



SIGNED,
A CONCERNED
CITIZEN.

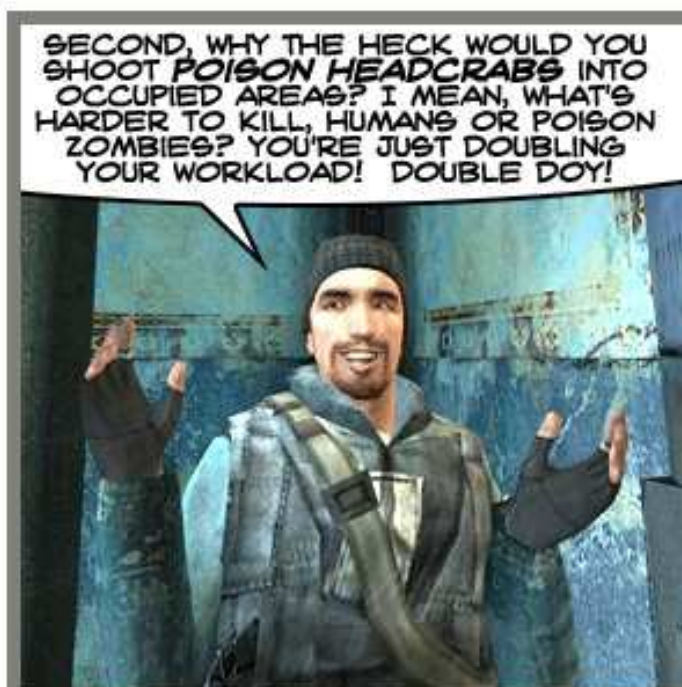
PS: SOME ROAD
SIGNS WOULD
BE NICE, TOO.



I THINK
I'M A LITTLE
LOST.









SIGH.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, PHIL?

OH, I DON'T KNOW, ROY.



YOU EVER FEEL LIKE... THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE TO LIFE? OR LIKE YOU'RE JUST GOING IN CIRCLES?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



I MEAN, LOOK. WE'VE TAKEN THESE GUYS HOSTAGE. AGAIN. AND IN A FEW MOMENTS WE'LL HAVE A SHOOTOUT WITH A SWAT TEAM. AGAIN. THEN, FIVE MINUTES OR SO LATER, WE'LL BE DOING IT ALL OVER. AGAIN!

WELL, WHAT ELSE WOULD WE DO?



WE COULD ISSUE RANSOM DEMANDS! OR ASK FOR SAFE PASSAGE TO THE AIRPORT! RELEASE A SINGLE HOSTAGE AS AN ACT OF GOOD WILL! BUT WE NEVER DO! JUST ONCE, I WANT TO DO SOMETHING NEW! SOMETHING DIFFERENT!



CRASH!

WAAGH!

THWAM!

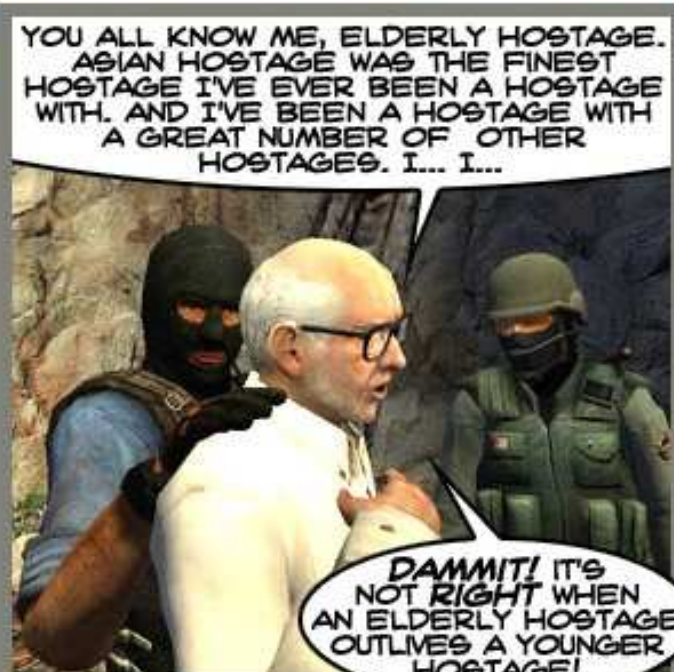
ARRRGH!

AIEE!



WELL, THAT WAS DIFFERENT.

I'M OKAY! I LANDED ON A SOFA AND A PERSON!















CHECK OUT THIS COOL BIKE I FOUND! SINCE I OUTRANK YOU, I GET TO RIDE IT FIRST.

WEREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR A REBEL RIDING AN ORANGE BICYCLE?

I DON'T LISTEN TO RADIO REPORTS. I OUTRANK YOU, SO I MAKE YOU DO IT FOR ME, REMEMBER?

WELL, LAST I HEARD, THE CHURCH OUTPOST SHOT THE GUY AND HIS BIKE OUT OF THEIR CANNON. BUT THEY THINK HE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE, AND WE--

DO YOU HEAR THAT? SOUNDS LIKE A CRANE SWINGING A GIANT MAGNET IN OUR GENERAL DIRECTION.

I'D LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT I OUTRANK YOU. NOW, CONTINUE.

SINCE I OUTRANK YOU, I ORDER YOU TO TURN AROUND AND LOOK.

WELL?

UH.

OOH, SORRY. I WAS AIMING FOR THE BIKE. ARE YOU GUYS OKAY?

WELL, HE'S DEAD. ON THE PLUS SIDE, I THINK YOU JUST PROMOTED ME.





THERE HAS BEEN SOME REBEL ACTIVITY IN THIS SECTOR, SO I WANT YOU TO REPORT ANYTHING UNUSUAL, NO MATTER HOW MINOR IT MIGHT BE.



HI, FELLOW COMBINE SOLDIERS! I'M GORDON FROHMAN! ER. I'M...

GORDON... COMBINE... SOLDIER... FROHMAN.



HEY, DID YOU FIND THE DEAD NAKED SOLDIER UP THE ROAD? IF SO, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT AND THE TIRE TRACK ACROSS HIS GROIN ISN'T FROM MY BIKE. PLUS HE WAS ALREADY DEAD WHEN I RAN OVER HIM.

AT ANY RATE, I'M DEFINITELY NOT A REBEL IN A COMBINE UNIFORM, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE ACCUSING ME OF!



AGGH! A REBEL-DETECTING ROLLERMINE!

LEAVE MY BIKE ALONE! IT WAS A GIFT FROM THE REBELS!



HA-HAH! I BET YOU'LL THINK TWICE NEXT TIME YOU ATTACK A REBEL WHO'S GOT A SHOVEL!

SO... ANYTHING UNUSUAL? NO MATTER HOW MINOR?



AND WHAT IF IT'S TOTALLY MAJOR?

THEN REPORT IT TO GORDON COMBINE SOLDIER FROHMAN. HE SEEMS TO KNOW A LOT ABOUT REBELS.

AGGH! IT'S GOT A FRIEND!



OKAY, OUT OF THE TRUCK.
TIME FOR A FOOT PATROL
ACROSS THE BRIDGE.

UNIT XL95-9, COME
WITH ME ACROSS THE
FLAT, SAFE SURFACE
THAT HOLDS NO
DANGERS AT ALL.

COMBINE FROHMAN,
YOU PATROL THE
RICKETY, HAZARDOUS
UNDERBELLY. TRY NOT TO
FALL TO YOUR DEATH.

HEY,
WHY CAN'T
I WALK ON
THE TOP
PART?

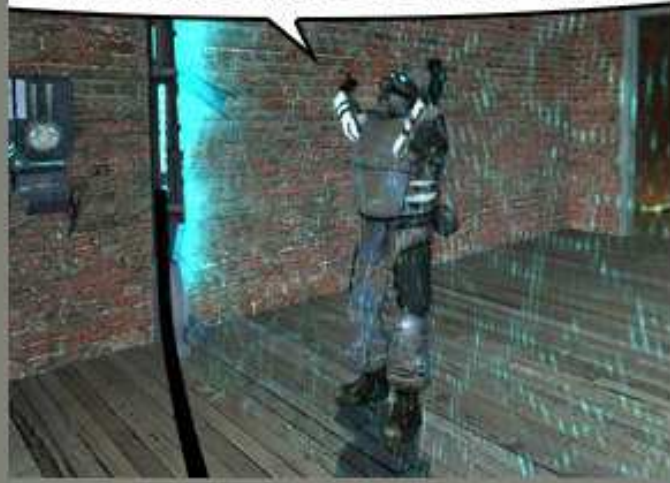
FINE, COME WITH US.
JUST WALK THROUGH
THIS INHIBITOR FIELD
THAT PREVENTS ANY
NON-COMBINE, OR,
SAY, FAKE-COMBINE,
FROM PASSING.

FZZUMP

FZZZAP

I HATE
BEING A FAKE
COMBINE.

GREAT. I CLIMB **UNDER** THE WHOLE STUPID BRIDGE TO GET TO THE CONTROLS TO THE BLUE FIZZY WALL ON **TOP** OF THE BRIDGE, AND WHAT DO I FIND? **ANOTHER** BLUE FIZZY WALL BLOCKING THE CONTROLS TO THE **ORIGINAL** BLUE FIZZY WALL!



WELL, I'LL JUST SIT HERE UNTIL SOMEONE COMES ALONG AND UNPLUGS IT.



IF ONLY I HAD THE GRAVITY GUN, I COULD YANK THAT PLUG OUT! BUT NO, INSTEAD OF A COOL DEVICE THAT CAN LIFT AND MANIPULATE OBJECTS, ALL I HAVE ARE MY STUPID HANDS.



I SWEAR, SOME DAYS MY LIFE FEELS LIKE SOMEONE PUT A BUNCH OF OBSTACLES IN MY PATH JUST TO SEE IF I CAN FIND SOLUTIONS TO THEM.

WONDER WHAT THE NEXT ONE WILL BE!



SO, A SOLDIER DEACTIVATES THE BRIDGE ACCESS FIELDS, SAYING HE DOESN'T LIKE TO WALK THROUGH THEM BECAUSE... WHY, EXACTLY?

HE SAID THEY BOTHER HIS SINUSES.

AND THEN YOU LET HIM LEAVE BECAUSE... WHY, AGAIN?

HE SAID HE HAD A DENTIST APPOINTMENT.

AND YOU BELIEVED HIM, DESPITE THE FACT OUR TEETH AND SINUSES WERE REMOVED DURING COMBINE SURGERY.

I ASKED HIM ABOUT THAT! HE SAID HE HAD THEM LEAVE HIS IN BECAUSE HE REALLY LOVES TO CHEW GUM AND... SMELL STUFF.

MAN. WHAT'S YOUR NEURAL IMPLANT MADE OF, SCRAP METAL FROM A PILE OF DOORKNOBS? YOU GOT DUPED BY A REBEL IN A COMBINE SUIT.

HEE
HEE!

GO TO FULL
ALERT.

I WANT TWO APCs TOPSIDE WITH FULL CREWS AND TWO MEN ON EACH GUARD TOWER. EVERYONE ELSE SPREAD OUT UNDER THE BRIDGE. AND WHERE THE HECK IS BRUCE?

RIGHT
HERE,
BOSS.

HI, BRUCE. I WANT YOU TO FLY AROUND AND SHOOT ANYTHING THAT MOVES, OKAY?

CAN I
MAKE SCARY
MECHANICAL
NOISES,
TOO?

UH. SURE.

COOL!
I'VE GOT
SOME NEW ONES,
WANNA HEAR
'EM?

SIGH.
FINE.

URRR-GALOOOGA!
URRR-GALOOOGA!

TERRIFYING.









ARE THOSE THE SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE?

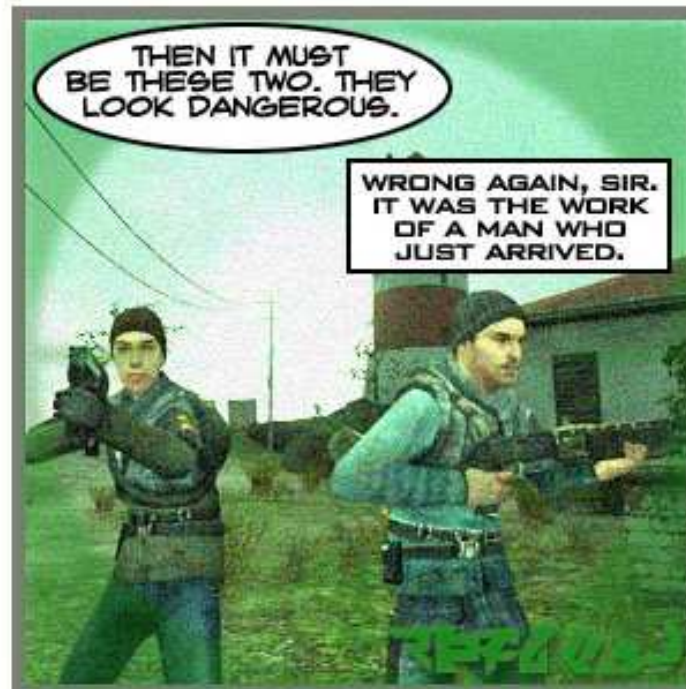
YES SIR. I WAS GOING TO PUT THEM IN A POWERPOINT PRESENTATION...

JUST HAND THEM HERE.



AH. THESE MUST BE THE REBELS WHO CAUSED SO MUCH DESTRUCTION ON THE BRIDGE.

NEGATIVE, SIR. THEY WERE AT THIS CAMP THE WHOLE TIME.



THEN IT MUST BE THESE TWO. THEY LOOK DANGEROUS.

WRONG AGAIN, SIR. IT WAS THE WORK OF A MAN WHO JUST ARRIVED.



OKAY. IF YOU TELL ME IT WAS HIM, YOU'RE FIRED.

IT... WAS NOT HIM. DEFINITELY NOT HIM.



UH, IGNORE THIS ONE, SIR. I WAS JUST FINISHING UP THE ROLL OF FILM.

HEH. THOSE GUYS!

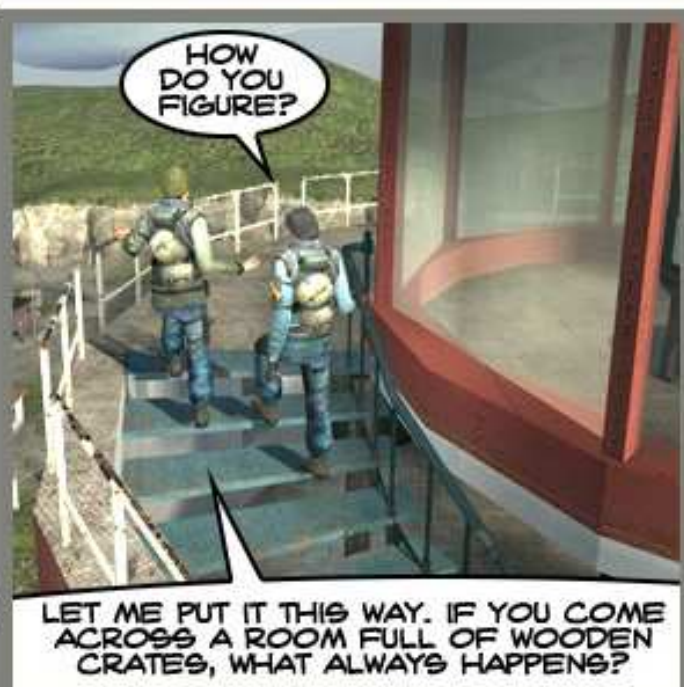


OH! UH. UH. SEE...

CRAP.

NOW I'M DEFINITELY FIRED, AREN'T I?

OH, YES. OUT OF A CANNON, IN FACT.



**WISH YOU
WERE HERE!**



DEAR DR. BREEN,

I BOUGHT THIS POSTCARD IN
THE LIGHTHOUSE GIFT SHOP
AND HAD TO SEND IT TO YOU!
(THEY ALSO HAD GRENADES.)

I'M REALLY HOMESICK FOR
CITY 17 BUT I'M ALMOST TO
NOVA PROSPEKT NOW. HOPE
YOU DIDN'T GIVE MY JOB
TO SOMEONE ELSE (HA-HA!)

THERE ARE NO TV'S HERE SO
I CAN'T WATCH YOUR SHOW...
HOPE I'M NOT MISSING ANY-
THING GOOD! I'D EVEN SETTLE
FOR A RERUN, LIKE THAT
ONE WHERE YOU TALK ABOUT
WHY IT'S A GOOD THING THAT
YOU COLLABORATED WITH THE
ALIENS TRYING TO EXTINGUISH
THE HUMAN RACE. GREAT STUFF!

WELL, I'M ABOUT OUT OF
ROOM! TTYL!

-A CONCERNED CITIZEN

PS: WHAT'S A LUNGFISH? SOUNDS GROSS!



WALLACE "WALLY" BREEN

TOP OF THE CITADEL

CITY 17

WHATEVER COUNTRY
THIS IS



HEY. HEY! IT'S THAT WEIRD CREEPY GUY WHO'S ALWAYS FOLLOWING ME AROUND! QUICK, LOOK! LOOK!



WHAT? WHO? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

AW, YOU MISSED HIM.



HE WAS RIGHT OVER HERE, I SWEAR!

SURE HE WAS.

HA! A PERFECTLY EXECUTED G-DEED! I HAVE GOT IT GOING ON TODAY!



NOW I CAN JUST STROLL AWAY AT MY LEISURE AND GRAB A TACO.



HM? SOMETHING UNDER THE...

...SAND?



ARE YOU CALLING ME A LIAR?

NO, JUST AN IDIOT.

WELL, TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME, LIAR!

IDIOT.

I KNOW YOU ARE BUT WHAT AM I?

AN IDIOT.

OOH, NICELY DONE! YOU WIN THIS ROUND!



FROHMAN, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY THE ANTLIONS ARE SO CRAZY LATELY? THEY'RE NORMALLY FAIRLY DOCILE CREATURES.



WELL, I DID RUN INTO SOME WHILE I WAS RIDING UP THE COAST...

BOY, IT SEEMS LIKE IT HAPPENED AN HOUR AGO... PROBABLY BECAUSE IT HAPPENED AN HOUR AGO.



ANTLIONS! SURE AM GLAD I'VE GOT THIS GAUSS GUN MOUNTED ON MY HANDLEBARS!



RING RING!
RING RING!

THAT'S NOT A GAUSS GUN!

THAT'S NOT A GAUSS GUN AT ALL!



UHH. FROHMAN?

IF YOU'RE HAVING A FLASHBACK YOU'VE GOT TO NARRATE IT FOR US.

WE CAN'T JUST SEE IT IN YOUR HEAD.

I... I DON'T THINK HE CAN HEAR ME.



HA! STUPID BUGS! I CAN STILL RUN YOU OVER!

WAY TO BE FAIRLY DOCILE, SUCKERS!

SO, WHY DO YOU THINK THE ANTLIONS GOT SO AGGRESSIVE, LASZLO?

WE MAY NEVER KNOW.



OKAY. I'VE DETERMINED THAT WALKING ON THE SAND WILL MAKE THE ANTLIONS ATTACK. HOWEVER, IF WE WALK ON OBJECTS ON TOP OF THE SAND...



...THEY'LL BE NONE THE WISER. SO, WE'LL JUST JUMP FROM OBJECT TO OBJECT TO GET PAST THEM SAFELY!

THAT'S BRILLIANT! YOU TRULY ARE THE BRIGHTEST MIND OF YOUR GENERATION!

JUMP? PFFT!



JUMPING PUZZLES ARE FOR EFFEMINATE ITALIAN PLUMBERS! I'VE ATTACHED WOODEN BOARDS TO MY BOOTS! NOW I CAN WALK RIGHT THROUGH THIS LEVEL. MAMMA MIA, I'M CLEVER!



WHY DON'T YOU DORKS JUST WAIT HERE. I'LL LOOK FOR SOME BOARDS FOR YOU.

ARRRRGH!

EEYAAAGH!

AAAAAAAAA!



WHAT IS IT, FROHMAN? ANTLIONS?

NO, IT'S NOT THAT.

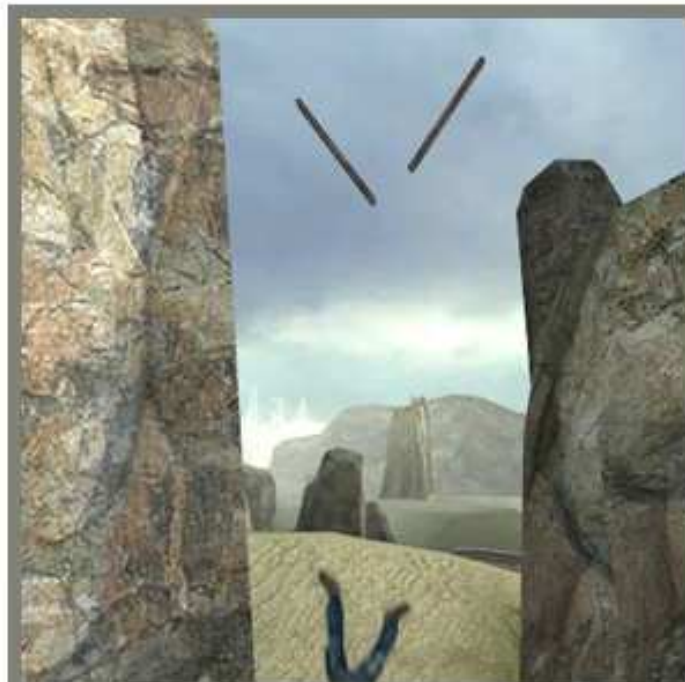


I'M JUST THINKING NAILING THE BOARDS ON WAS A BAD IDEA.

AND NOT TAKING MY BOOTS OFF FIRST WAS A WORSE ONE.

MAN. I GOTTA LAY OFF THE MUSHROOMS.

















BEHIND THE COMIC

"CONCERNED" HAS GONE FROM OBSCURE COMIC TO A STAPLE OF A GAMER'S WEB DIET. BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM?



WHAT SPARKED THE RISE OF GORDON FROHMAN TO A HOUSEHOLD NAME?



OH SURE, I REMEMBER WHEN CHRIS FIRST CAME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR A NEW COMIC.

I HAD JUST FIRED HIM AGAIN, MAYBE FOR THE FIFTH TIME

HE THEN WENT ON A RAMPAGE OF DRINKING, SEX, DRUGS, AND CONSTANT GAMING

John Wilson
Former boss

BUT FROM OUT OF THAT TURMOIL WAS BORN AN IDEA. CHRIS BECAME FRIENDS WITH MALE_07, WHO WOULD LATER PLAY THE LEAD CHARACTER, GORDON FROHMAN.



SOON THEY BEGAN COLLABORATING AND CASTING THE VARIOUS PLAYERS FOR THE ROLES IN THE COMIC.



OH SURE I THOUGHT IT WAS A GREAT IDEA WHEN THEY PITCHED IT

OF COURSE I WAS ALSO REALLY DRUNK

BUT THEN SO WERE THEY! HAHHA!

CHARLES ROLIND, WHO PLAYED "DOG", WAS JUST FINISHING A RUN WITH THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE TROUPE WHEN CHRIS CONTACTED HIM ABOUT THE JOB.



*Alas, poor Yorick.
I knew him, Horatio.*

THE START OF PRODUCTION ON THE FIRST EPISODE WAS DELAYED DUE TO TECHNICAL ISSUES



DJ SEH-VUN
IN DA HIZZOUSE!

AS WELL AS MALE_07'S CONTRACT AS A RAVE DJ AND KARAOKE HOST

AS 'CONCERNED' GREW
IN POPULARITY, SUCCESS
BEGAN TO TAKE A TOLL
ON THE STARS.



GORDON AND I WERE
TALKING TO SOME PEOPLE
AND SEVEN WALKS IN WITH
THESE TWO BLONDES



THAT'S WHEN
SANDY GOT
THERE...

THEY STARTED GOING
AT IT, LIKE THEY HAD
SOMETHING GOING ON.
SO AWKWARD...

AS EGOS FLARED, SO DID TENSIONS
AROUND THE ORGANIZATION.



FTANK



WHERE IS MY
CHILLED DASANI?!
HELL-LO!!



ELAM

THE SITUATION CLIMAXED, THOUGH,
WHEN A CAST MEMBER RAN AFOWL
OF THE LAW.

CHARACTER ACTOR JIM WILLS, WHO
PLAYS "BARNEY", HAD BEEN IN
A BATTLE WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
AND WAS ARRESTED IN MARCH, 2006



IT WAS REALLY BAD. WE HAD GONE TO THIS CLUB, AND SOME GUY WAS HITTING ON ME. JIM WAS DRUNK, AND HIT THE GUY WITH A STUNSTICK PROP.

Paulina Souther
Will's ex-fiance

WITHOUT CHRIS' LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL SKILLS, WE HAD A TOUGH TIME.

EVERYONE CHIPPED IN WHERE THEY COULD. ALYX HELPED IN WARDROBE, SANDY IN MAKEUP...

IT WAS THEN THAT CREATOR CHRIS LIVINGSTON KNEW HE HAD TO TAKE DRASTIC ACTION

SCREEN THIS! I'M GOING ON VACATION!

slam!

ALTHOUGH SEVEN HELPING IN SPECIAL EFFECTS WASN'T SUCH A GREAT IDEA...

POOOOM

ELI!
I THINK I HAVE THIS PYROTECHNIC FIGURED OUT!

NEXT EPISODE:
THE TURNAROUND!

AWW, YOU'RE A CUTE LITTLE ANTLION, AREN'T YOU? **AREN'T** YOU? YES, YOU ARE! YES, YOU **ARE!** YOU'RE A **GOOD** BOY! I THINK I'LL CALL YOU... EDWARD!

GO FETCH YOUR PHEROPOD! GO GET IT! GO GET IT!

SCREEEE!

HEH, LOOK AT HIM GO. HE REALLY LOVES HIS...

WAIT, I'M STILL HOLDING THE PHEROPOD. SO, WHAT THE HECK DID I JUST THROW?

SCREEE?

BIP BIP BIP BIP BIP

BOOM

YOU'RE A CUTE LITTLE ANTLION, AREN'T YOU? YES, YOU **ARE!** I THINK I'LL CALL YOU... EDWARD **JUNIOR.** YES I WILL! OH, YES I **WILL!**

I SURE AM GLAD YOU ANTLIONS ARE COMING WITH ME TO NOVA PROSPEKT! IT'S NICE TO HAVE SOME FRIENDS TO TRAVEL WITH FOR A CHANGE.



I WAS HANGING WITH TWO GUYS FOR A WHILE, BUT THEN THEY TOTALLY DITCHED ME!

AT LEAST I THINK THEY DITCHED ME... WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AGAIN?



WANNA BUILD A SAND CASTLE?



OKAY.

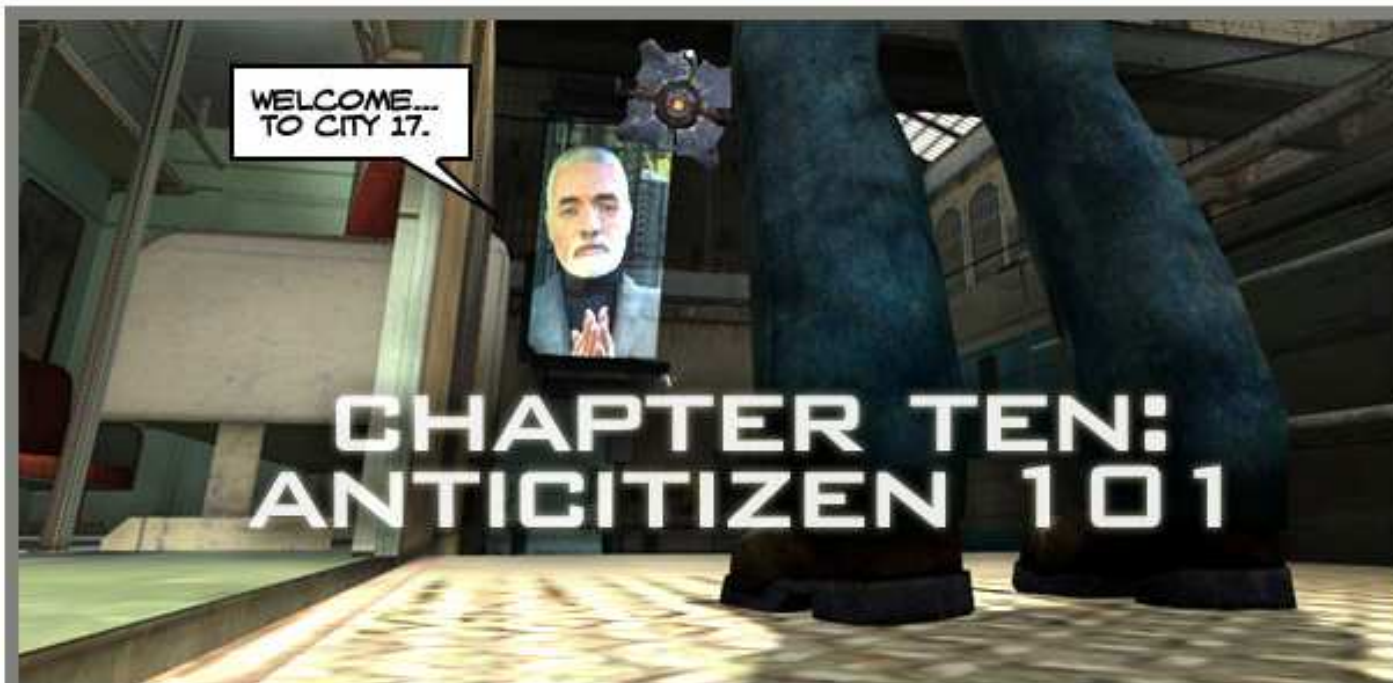
AH, WELL. WHATEVER!

THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT I'VE GOT YOU GUYS NOW! I JUST HOPE YOU GET ALONG WITH THE COMBINE AS WELL AS I DO!









OKAY, GUYS. DADDY HAS TO GO INTO WORK, SO WHY DON'T YOU PLAY IN THIS ALLEY FOR A COUPLE HOURS. DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT! I'VE GOTTA MAKE A LIVING, YOU KNOW!



SUCH CUTE LITTLE CRITTERS.

HANK!
WHAT'S UP? YOU
LOOK GREAT!
BEEN WORKING
OUT?



DON'T TOUCH ME.

MAN, I
MISSED THIS PLACE...
THE SIGHTS, THE SOUNDS,
THE SMELLS, THE
SCREAMS...



THE
CITADEL...

THAT
NEVER SEEMS
TO GET ANY
CLOSER...

NO
MATTER HOW
FAR YOU
WALK...



SICK? HE DISAPPEARS
FOR THREE WEEKS AND
THEN HE CALLS IN SICK?



YES, SIR.

SICK OF
WALKING, SIR.



GONNNNNNNNKK
GONNNNNNNNKK

THE CITADEL
KLAXON... NEVER
HEARD IT GO
OFF BEFORE.



SOUNDS
LIKE
TROUBLE.

SOUNDS
LIKE HOPE.

SOUNDS
LIKE A FIRE
DRILL.



HEY,
OFFICER.
WHAT'S ALL THIS
ABOUT?

NOTHING.
EVERYTHING IS
NORMAL.

WHY DID
DR. BREEN'S SHOW
JUST GO OFF
THE AIR?

UM. TECHNICAL
DIFFICULTIES.
NORMAL ONES.



WHY ARE
THERE COPS
RUNNING ALL OVER
THE PLACE?

IT'S NORMAL. JUST
GETTING EXERCISE.
NORMAL EXERCISE.



WHY ARE THERE SO MANY SCANNERS
POURING OUT OF THE CITADEL?



BECAUSE SOME IDIOT ORDERED
100,000 OF THEM A FEW WEEKS
AGO AND WE NEED TO GET RID
OF THEM.

HEY,
THE **ZERO** KEY
STICKS ON MY
KEYBOARD,
OKAY?

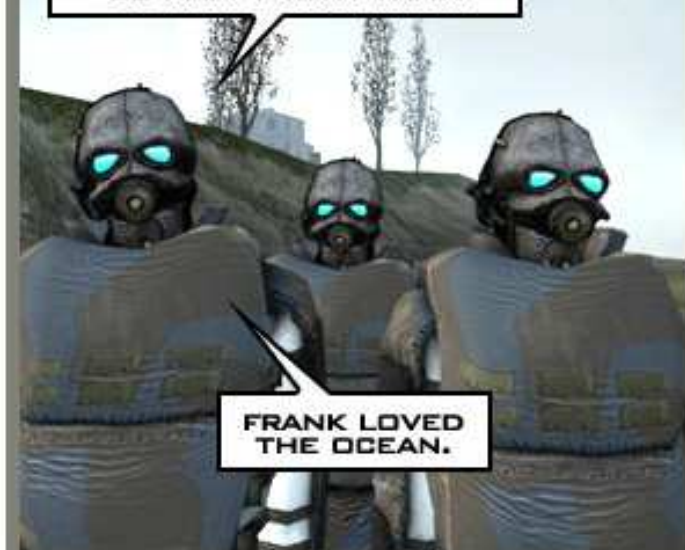
I MEAN.
HIS KEYBOARD.
HIS.







WELL, AT LEAST WE GOT
TO BURY HIM BY THE
OCEAN. I THINK HE WOULD
BE HAPPY WITH THAT.



FRANK LOVED
THE OCEAN.

HEH. HEY, REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE
WORKING NIGHTS IN DELTA QUADRANT?
FRANK WOULD SPEND HOURS TALKING
ABOUT HOW WE COULD DRAIN EARTH'S
OCEANS WITH A GIANT UNDERWATER
TELEPORTER, AND BRING THE OCEANS
WITH US TO THE NEXT PLANET THE
COMBINE TOOK OVER?



HA HA, YEAH! HE USED TO DRIVE
ME NUTS WITH ALL THAT TALK!
I WAS ALWAYS, LIKE, OKAY, DUDE,
WHATEVER! AND HE WOULD SIT
DOWN AND DO ALL THE MATH
AND EQUATIONS TO PROVE IT
WOULD ACTUALLY WORK!

HEH HEH HEH.

MAN.



GOOD OL'
FRANK.



I CAN'T BELIEVE WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE SOME PSYCHO CAN JUST DRIVE AROUND, KILLING WHOEVER HE WANTS! THIS IS CRAZY! THIS IS CRAZY, GUYS!



IT'S JUST PLAIN WRONG.

BUT WHAT CAN WE, AS HEAVILY ARMORED, HIGHLY TRAINED COMBINE SOLDIERS, POSSIBLY DO ABOUT THIS FREEMAN GUY?



LISTEN, GUYS, OUTPOST TANGO IS RIGHT OVER THAT HILL, AND FREEMAN MIGHT STILL BE ON THE COAST ROAD. IF WE DOUBLE-TIME IT, WE CAN PUT A STOP TO THIS MASS MURDERER BEFORE HE KILLS AGAIN!



WE CAN'T SAVE FRANK, BUT WE CAN STILL AVENGE HIM! COME ON, GUYS! IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO LATE! THERE MIGHT STILL BE ENOUGH TIME!

LET'S GO!

ATTACK!

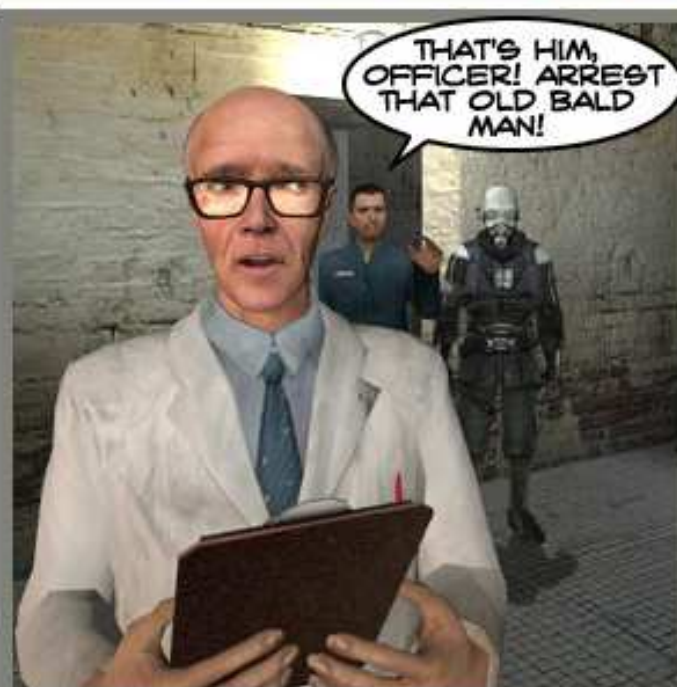


FOR FRANK!



ERNIE?

OH, GOD.



OKAY, FROHMAN. GET READY TO START A NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE. IT'S CALLED "POINT INSERTION" AND IT FEATURES THIS STUNSTICK IN AN UNFORGETTABLE STARRING ROLE!



THERE'S NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE! I'M SURE THIS POOR, MISGUIDED YOUNG MAN MEANT NO HARM! HE MAY BE SUFFERING FROM THE SIDE-EFFECTS OF TELEPORTATION, OR HE MAY HAVE BEEN BRAINWASHED BY THE COMBINE, OR THINGS OF THAT NATURE!



IN FACT, IF YOU'LL ALLOW ME, I'D LIKE TO WRITE YOU A FORMAL LETTER OF APOLOGY FOR MY BEHAVIOR!



YOU SEE, NO REASON TO HARM HIM!

MM-HMM.



LEMME SEE THAT.



"DEAR DR. BREEN. HELP! I'VE BEEN TAKEN PRISONER BY AN ALCOHOLIC AND A STEREOTYPICAL ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR! SEND STRIDERS!"



The Anticitizen Bugle

City 17's #1 Underground Alternative Newspaper. News For Rebels, By Rebels

NOVA PROSPEKT INVADED!

NOVA PROSPEKT - The former prison turned Combine stronghold, where captured humans are transformed into mindless Combine slaves, stalkers, and soldiers, has finally been brought to its knees.

Dr. Gordon Freeman, scientist and adventurer, invaded the facility along with an army of Antlions sometime last night, bravely battling the guards and attempting to free Dr. Eli Vance, who was captured when the Combine stormed Black Mesa East the night before last. Vance's daughter, Alyx, was reportedly assisting Dr. Freeman during the invasion. The whereabouts of Freeman and both of the Vances are currently unknown.



Above: Victory at Nova Prospekt!

Dr. Breen, administrator of City 17 and Nova Prospekt could not be reached for comment by press time.

TODAY'S WEATHER:
Revoltng

Traitor Captured, Held

KLEINER'S LAB - A man accused of betraying the human race was captured and is being held in Dr. Kleiner's secret lab.

"Okay, I did it. I betrayed the remnants of the human race by voluntarily working in the Citadel, by informing Dr. Breen of the location of the secret Ravenholm settlement, and by trying to turn Kleiner over to Combine forces," the as-yet unnamed traitor was quoted as saying. "How many times do I have to say I'm sorry before I'm forgiven? Fifty? A hundred? A thousand? Tell me!"

"Let's start with once," Barney Calhoun was quoted as replying. "Once would be a good start."

THE COMBINE ADVISOR

NEWS YOU CAN USE. IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO USE THIS NEWS YOU WILL BE KILLED.

EVERYTHING IS FINE.

NOVA PROSPEKT - Everything is fine here in Nova Prospekt, according to everyone in Nova Prospekt, sources inside Nova Prospekt said today. There is absolutely nothing about the situation in Nova Prospekt that is anything but totally fine.

"There have been no unusual events or circumstances inside the former prison, now a theme park for humans, with rides and candy and cute puppy dogs and soft pillows," said Dr. Breen, the very handsome, smart, and kind administrator of City 17 and Nova Prospekt. "Really!"

"Also, all your relatives are here and are happy and they really miss you," he added. Then he made a small child smile by giving him a lollypop.



Dr. Breen: "Fine! Just Fine!"

IN OTHER NEWS:

Combine Soldier Frank Paulson Dies At Age 31 of Completely Natural Causes. See The Obituaries, Pages 14 - 38

POINT / COUNTERPOINT EVERYTHING IS FINE!



Combine Officer
Tom Johnson

Dr. Breen says everything is totally fine, and I have no reason to think otherwise. Anyone who doesn't think everything is totally fine has a screw loose. Everything is totally fine.

FINE? TRY AWESOME!



Combine Officer
John Thompson

Things aren't just fine! They're totally awesome! Saying things are just fine is crazy, when things are as awesome as they are! Things are just plain awesome!

HERE'S THE SITUATION. OUR VORT SOURCES TELL US ELI VANCE WAS TELEPORTED TO THE CITADEL. AS FOR GORDON AND ALYX, WE DON'T KNOW **WHERE** THEY ARE. AFTER DOCTOR K TALKED TO ALYX OVER THE RADIO LAST NIGHT, THEY **SHOULD** HAVE BEEN 'PORTED BACK HERE. NO SUCH LUCK.



EITHER WAY, WE CAN'T JUST SIT AROUND WAITING FOR THEM. WE'VE GOT TO RESCUE ELI.

FROHMAN, YOU'RE A TRAITOR... BUT I'M REQUIRED BY STANDARD PLOT GUIDELINES TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO REDEEM YOURSELF.



OH, YES! GOODIE! I WANT TO HELP!

YES... **HELP**. HELP **MYSELF** OUT OF THIS CRUMMY LAB AND BACK TO THE CITADEL. I'LL REDEEM MYSELF, THAT'S FOR SURE. REDEEM MYSELF WITH THE **COMBINE!**



OKAY, KLEINER IS GOING TO CONTACT THE REBELS ON THE COAST, AND I'M GONNA ROUND UP WHAT CIVILIANS I CAN FROM THE CITY. BUT WE NEED MORE WEAPONS. THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.



HEY, GOT IT COVERED! I WORK IN PURCHASING! I'LL GET YOU LOADS OF WEAPONS! TOO **MANY** WEAPONS!

FOOLISH CALHOUN... WHAT YOU DON'T REALIZE IS THAT YOU'VE ALREADY **GOT** TOO MANY WEAPONS... AND THEY'RE ALL NAMED **ME!** AND I'M FULLY LOADED AND READY TO GO OFF RIGHT IN YOUR FACE! HAH HA HA!



UH? OH! WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT? I DIDN'T MEAN **ANY** OF THAT!

WAIT. I DIDN'T EVEN SAY ANY OF THAT.



NO, BUT YOU **ARE** MAKING SPOOKY SHADOW FACES WITH YOUR FLASHLIGHT, AND IT'S A BIT TROUBLING.

WELCOME TO REBEL TRAINING, OR AS I LIKE TO CALL IT, ANTICITIZEN 101. WE'RE NOT SURE WHEN DR. FREEMAN WILL RETURN, BUT WHEN HE DOES, HE'S GONNA NEED ALL THE HELP HE CAN GET TO TAKE ON THE COMBINE.



OKAY. WHO HERE CAN TELL ME WHAT THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF BEING A REBEL IS? WHEN THE BOMBS ARE DROPPING AND THE BULLETS ARE FLYING, WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU NEED TO BE FOCUSING ON?



TEAMWORK?

ACCURACY.

STAYING CALM?

SURRENDERING TO THE COMBINE?

SOME OF THOSE ARE GOOD IDEAS. BUT THE RIGHT ANSWER IS "POLITENESS".

BE POLITE AT ALL TIMES! WHEN YOU GET IN FREEMAN'S WAY, EXCUSE YOURSELF! JUST BECAUSE YOU MIGHT BE GUT-SHOT IS NO REASON TO BE RUDE.

OKAY, LET'S PRACTICE. REPEAT AFTER ME. "EXCUSE ME."

EXCUSE ME.

"SORRY, DOC."

SORRY, DOC.

"PARDON ME!"

PARDON ME!

UH, DO WE REALLY NEED TO PRACTICE EXCUSING OURSELVES? HOW OFTEN IS THIS REALLY GONNA COME UP?



A LOT. YOU'LL SEE WHY WHEN WE GET TO LESSON TWO AND THREE, WHICH ARE "CLUSTER AROUND FREEMAN AT ALL TIMES" AND "PERSONAL SPACE: THE GREAT MYTH OF URBAN COMBAT."

...AND THAT'S WHY, DESPITE FREEMAN'S EXTENSIVE COMBAT EXPERIENCE, YOU SHOULDN'T BE SHY ABOUT NAGGING HIM TO RELOAD. CONSTANTLY.

UH, CAN I SKIP THIS CLASS? I ALREADY KNOW EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FIGHTING IN A WAR.

AFTER ALL, MY GRANDFATHER, MORGAN FROHMAN, FOUGHT IN WORLD WAR TWO.

PRIVATE FROHMAN! FRONT AND CENTER!

WHY THE HELL AREN'T YOU IN UNIFORM, SOLDIER?

HEY, DADDY-O! DON'T BE A FLAT TIRE! I'M JUST GINNED UP, I'M GAMMIN', I'M HEADING TO THE FROLIC PAD AND I DON'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE A DEAD HOOVER! I'M A HEP CAT, AND I WANT TO CUT A RUG WITH SOME KITTENS!

TWENTY-THREE SKIDOO! AGGGGH!

BOOM

SPAKK

KRAUT SNIPER. AND THANK GOD.

YEAH, I COULDN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF THAT PERIOD SLANG.

SO... WHAT'S THE LESSON? DON'T WEAR A ZOOT SUIT INTO COMBAT? DON'T STAND UP DURING A FIREFIGHT? DON'T BE A COMPLETE IDIOT?

NO, DON'T FIGHT IN A WAR.





OKAY, EVERYONE, LISTEN UP!

SPLIT INTO FOUR-MAN SQUADS.

SPREAD OUT AROUND THE CITY.

WAIT FOR MY SIGNAL.

THEN BEGIN THE ATTACK.

YOU FOUR, STAY HERE. ONCE THE FIGHTING STARTS, ROUND UP THE REST OF THE CITIZENS, GET THEM GEARED UP, AND GET THEM ARMED. WITH ANY LUCK, FREEMAN WILL ARRIVE SOON. EVERYONE ELSE, MOVE OUT!



OKAY! BYE, BARNEY! WOW, GUYS, THIS IS EXCITING, HUH? I'M REALLY HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS SQUAD! HEY! MAYBE WE SHOULD GO AROUND AND INTRODUCE OURSELVES, HUH?



I'M ROBBIE RAUSCHENBERG! I'M FRESH-FACED AND OPTIMISTIC. I'LL ALWAYS BE TALKING ABOUT HOW WHEN THE WAR IS OVER I'M GONNA GET ME A LITTLE FARMHOUSE AND SETTLE DOWN WITH MY SWEETHEART. I CARRY A PICTURE OF HER AROUND AND TALK ABOUT HER WISTFULLY.



I'LL PROBABLY GET SHOT UP AND DIE SLOWLY, WHILE YOU CROWD AROUND ME AND TELL ME I'LL BE OKAY. THEN YOU'LL GENTLY CLOSE MY EYES. IT'LL BE INCREDIBLY MOVING, I JUST KNOW IT!

NAME'S CLAY... I'M SHIFTY-EYED AND UNTRUSTWORTHY. I'LL PROBABLY DITCH YOU GUYS WHEN THE COMBAT GETS TOO INTENSE, WHICH IS IN KEEPING WITH MY SELFISH, COWARDLY NATURE. OF COURSE, I'LL REDEEM MYSELF LATER...



...AFTER BEING WOUNDED, AND TELLING YOU TO GO ON AND LEAVE ME BEHIND. THEN I'LL DETONATE A GRENADE, KILLING MYSELF BUT TAKING OUT SOME COMBINE SOLDIERS TOO, ALLOWING YOU TO ESCAPE SAFELY.

CALL ME BOOMER. I'M AN EXPLOSIVES EXPERT, BECAUSE EVERY SQUAD HAS AN EXPLOSIVES EXPERT. I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT BOMBS, EXCEPT WHEN I'M DEFUSING THEM I HAVE TO GUESS WHICH WIRE TO CUT AT THE VERY END, SINCE I MISSED THE LAST DAY OF BOMB-DEFUSAL CLASS.



AT SOME POINT, I'LL LIGHT A STICK OF DYNAMITE WITH A CIGAR AND TOSS IT OVER MY SHOULDER, WALKING AWAY CALMLY AS EVERYTHING EXPLODES BEHIND ME. WHICH IS REALLY COOL.

I'M GORDON FROHMAN, AND I'M WONDERING WHERE THE SECONDARY FIRE ON THIS COMBINE PULSE RIFLE IS.



FOOOONG!



FRIZZLE

FRAZZLE

FROZZLE



UH.
FOUND
IT.





IT'S NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE! COME ON, OFFICERS! YOU GUYS KNOW ME! I'M GORDON FROHMAN! I WOULDN'T START A REVOLUTION!



LOOK!

IT'S GORDON FROHMAN!

AND HE'S STARTING THE REVOLUTION!

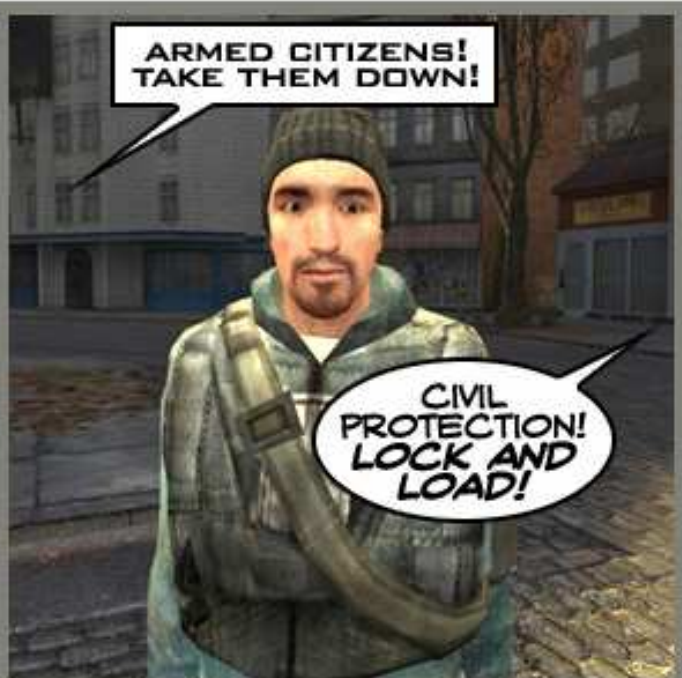


OKAY, I KNOW THAT SOUNDED BAD, BUT I CAN EXPLAIN. SEE...



OKAY, I... I GOT NOTHIN'.

ARMED CITIZENS! TAKE THEM DOWN!



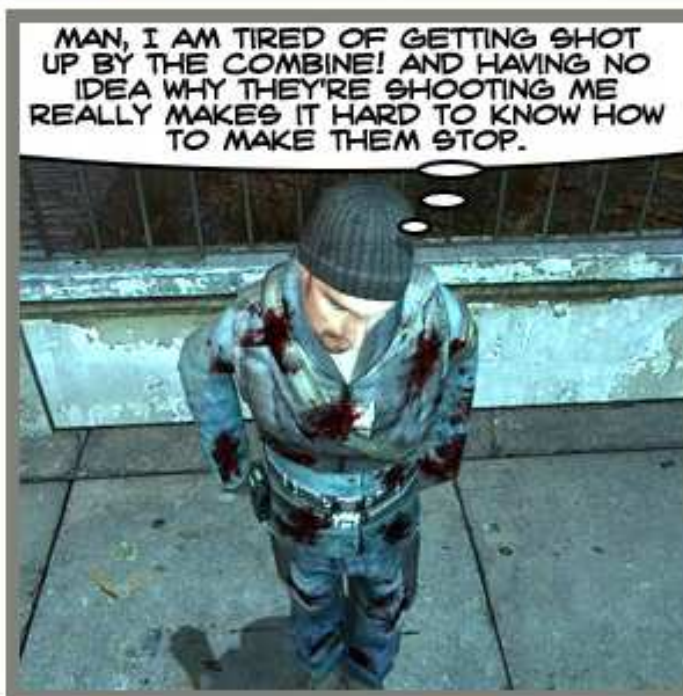
CIVIL PROTECTION! LOCK AND LOAD!



OPEN FIRE!











SUSAN?
COULD YOU
SHOW IN THE
NEXT PATIENT,
PLEASE?

Dr. Gordon Frohman
+ Medical Doctor +
of Medicine, DDS Ph.D



WELL, WHAT AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG
LADY! YOU LOOK A BIT BANGED UP,
THOUGH... WHAT HAPPENED? DIDJA
GET IN A SCUFFLE WITH ANOTHER
WOMAN AT A SHOE SALE OR
SOMETHING? HEH HEH HEH.



NO.

I GOT
SHOT.

IN THE
LUNG.



NOW, I
JUST NEED A
MEDIT, SO FORK
IT OVER.

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, ONE OF
US IS A DOCTOR AND THE OTHER ONE
OF US IS YOU. SO, WHY DON'T YOU
SLOWLY STRIP DOWN TO YOUR UNDER-
THINGS, AND I'LL HAVE SUSAN CANCEL
THE REST OF MY APPOINTMENTS.



FIRST OF ALL, YOU'RE NOT A DOCTOR.
YOU'RE JUST A PUTZ WHO HANDS OUT
MEDIT. SECOND, THERE'S NO SUSAN
OUT THERE. YOU DON'T HAVE A
RECEPTIONIST. THIS IS BECAUSE, AND
HERE I REFER YOU TO POINT ONE,
YOU'RE NOT A DOCTOR.



OH,
FORGET
IT. I'VE GOT
ANOTHER
LUNG.

HUH!
TWO LUNGS?
REALLY! SUSAN,
WRITE THAT
DOWN!



DANGIT! I'VE GOT FIVE MINUTES UNTIL DR. BREEN'S EVENING BROADCAST, AND THERE'S A LINE OF PATIENTS OUT THE DOOR! GOTTA FINISH UP QUICK, SO THEY'D BETTER NOT HAVE A BUNCH OF COMPLICATED INJURIES, EACH ONE MORE RIDICULOUS THAN THE LAST!



THIS IS GONNA SOUND CRAZY, BUT A GRENADE WENT OFF IN MY MOUTH!



LOOKS FINE! HAVE A MEDKIT!

SHOTGUN BLAST TO THE CROTCH.

SELF-INFLICTED.



IT HAPPENS! TAKE THIS MEDKIT!

I ASK ONLY FFFFFOR A FRIEND OF MINE... HE WAS SHOT IN THE BHHHHKKK... IN THE BKKKKHHH...

BUTT?

BRIEF-CASE.



MEDKIT!

WHAT? WHAT? YOU DON'T EVEN LOOK HURT.



OH, NOT IN THE *FLESH*, NO, MAN, BUT I'M, LIKE, TOTALLY AILING IN THE *BRAIN*, MAN! THIS WAR HAS ME, LIKE, STRESSIN' OUT IN THE GREY MATTER! MY *MIIIND* IS BLOWN AND THE PIECES CANNOT BE PICKED UP! CAN WE JUST, LIKE, RAP ABOUT STUFF FOR A WHILE?

RAP ABOUT *THIS*, HIPPIE! RAP ABOUT THE MEDKIT I PUSHED INTO YOUR *BRAIN*!

OW, MAN, CAN'T I JUST, LIKE, GET A HUG, MAN?

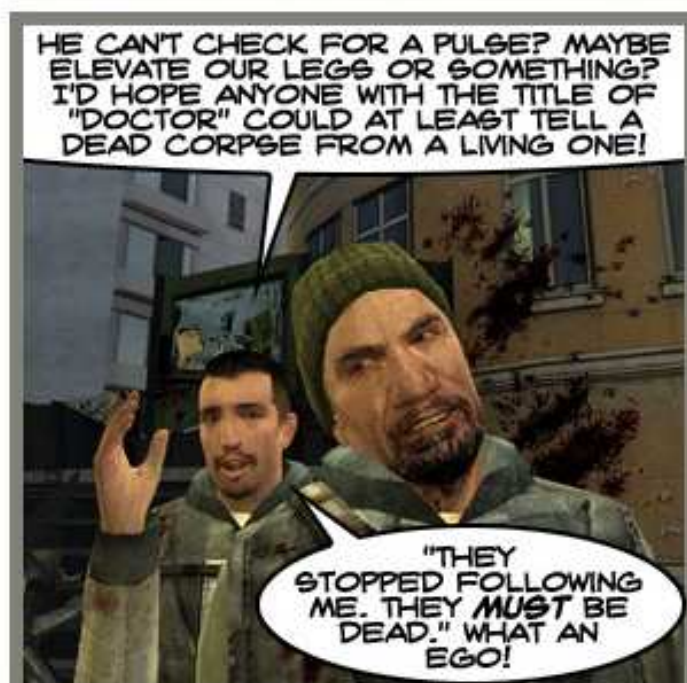












LOOK, WE DON'T **NEED** FREEMAN! I CAN FILL IN JUST FINE. I EVEN FOUND SOME GLASSES! CHECK ME OUT!



I'M GORDON FREEMAN! I NEVER SAY ANYTHING! BLAH BLAH BLAH!

THAT'S A TERRIBLE IMPRESSION. "I NEVER SAY ANYTHING, BLAH BLAH BLAH"? THAT... THAT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE **SENSE**.



OKAY, I'LL WORK ON IT. THE GLASSES ARE SPOT ON, THOUGH, RIGHT?

LOOK, FREEMAN IS MORE THAN JUST A PAIR OF GLASSES. HE'S GOT SKILLS. HECK, DESPITE NEVER SAYING A WORD, HE HAS THE ABILITY TO COMMAND HIS SQUADMATES TO RUN ANYWHERE HE WANTS THEM TO JUST BY **LOOKING** AT THE SPOT HE'D LIKE THEM TO RUN TO!



WELL, WHO KNOWS. MAYBE I CAN DO THAT, TOO! LEMME GIVE IT A WHIRL!



HE HAS THE GIFT. I'VE GOT THE URGE TO RUN.



I'D LIKE TO BACK AWAY SLOWLY. DOES THAT COUNT?



WORKING AT BLACK MESA WAS PRETTY COOL, BUT THINGS COULD GET A LITTLE CONFUSING, TOO...

MORNING, BARNEY! HEY, DIDN'T I JUST SEE YOU OUTSIDE A SECOND AGO?

NAH, THAT GUY JUST LOOKS AND SOUNDS A LOT LIKE ME. I'M THE REAL BARNEY, THOUGH.

LIKE HELL YOU ARE! I'M THE REAL BARNEY!

OH. ARE YA SURE? I THOUGHT I WAS.

WELL, THINK AGAIN, PAL.

WAIT, IF YOU'RE THE REAL BARNEY, THEN WHO THE HELL AM I?

QUIET, ALL OF YOU! I HAPPEN TO KNOW FOR A FACT THAT THE GENUINE BARNEY CALHOUN IS CURRENTLY PATROLLING THE TRAM TUNNELS.

NOW STOP THIS META-NONSENSE AND GET BACK TO WORK!

SORRY, DR. KLEINER. WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

HE'S NOT DR. KLEINER! I AM!

DID SOMEONE CALL MY NAME?

LUCKILY, THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN SO MUCH THESE DAYS.

THANK GOD FOR THAT.

REALLY! I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW WEIRD THAT MUST HAVE BEEN!

ME NEITHER!

BLEAH.
THESE BLURRY
FILE CABINETS GIVE
ME A HEADACHE. WHAT
ELSE WE GOT
HERE?



DR. KLEINER SAID HE WOULD BE
BUSY MOST OF THE DAY, SO HE
LEFT ME A TO-DO LIST IN ORDER
TO MICROMANAGE ME FROM AFAR...

1) Order one-hundred
long-jump modules for
science team. We're fresh out!



A BULK
ORDER? SOUNDS
EASY ENOUGH.

2) Confirm that the new "Source"
software was installed properly
on our mainframe. Water
effects will appear much improved!



NEW SOFTWARE?
HMM... GUESS THAT WEIRD
GUY WITH THE BRIEFCASE
MUST BE THE SOFTWARE
SALESMAN.

3) Deliver experimental alien
borderworld sample to test
chamber for questionable
teleportation experiments in
which we scientists once again
tamper with the fabric of
the universe while neither
considering nor preparing
for the negative consequences
of our actions.



COME ON!
OPEN UP! I WANT
TO SEE THE NEW WATER
EFFECTS!



LOOK, I
CAN'T EVEN GO WITH
YOU TALKING!

MEANWHILE, IN THE PAST...

OKAY,
I'M DONE
DELIVERING THE
XEN BORDERWORLD
SAMPLE TO THE TEST
CHAMBER, WHICH
MEANS...



MMM,
A DELICIOUS
WEDGE OF BOURNES
PASTURIZED ORGANIC
CHESHIRE CHEESE!
MY FAVORITE
SNACK!



IT'S
BREAK-
TIME!



THINK
I'LL HAVE ME
A SNACK IN THE
EMPLOYEE
LOUNGE.

WAIT
A SECOND...
THIS DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE MY CHEESE. IT
DOESN'T EVEN SMELL
LIKE MY CHEESE.
WHAT THE...



NOT ONLY
IS THIS NOT MY CHEESE, IT
ISN'T CHEESE AT ALL! THIS IS
THAT XEN BORDER-
WORLD SAMPLE!

WELL,
LET'S SEE. IF I
HAVE THE XEN SAMPLE
WITH ME, AND MY CHEESE
IS MISSING, THEN I MUST'VE
DELIVERED MY CHEESE
TO THE TEST
CHAMBER.



GOSH.
WONDER WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN YOU
PERFORM TELEPORTATION
EXPERIMENTS ON
CHEESE...

YOU
MEAN... YOU...
YOU'RE THE
ONE WHO...



YES.
I'M THE ONE
WHO DISCOVERED THAT
THE XEN BORDERWORLD IS
EXTREMELY LACTOSE
INTOLERANT.

A LITTLE LATER, I HELPED A FEMALE BLACK OPS ASSASSIN AND A MARINE GRUNT GET BACK TOGETHER...



YOU JUST NEED TO FOCUS ON COMMON INTERESTS... YOU **BOTH** LIKE KILLING TERRIFIED SCIENTISTS... ISN'T THAT WHAT'S **REALLY** IMPORTANT?

THIS WAS AROUND THE TIME I GOT A PET GARGANTUA NAMED HERSCHEL...



HERSCHEL! I CHECKED THE RULEBOOK, AND THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE THAT SAYS WE CAN'T HAVE A GARG ON THE SOCCER TEAM! THIS IS GONNA BE THE BEST SUMMER EVER!

HOLD ON, HOLD ON... BLACK OPS AND GRUNTS DATING... A PET GARG...

NAMED HERSCHEL!



GOD. YOU'RE JUST... **MAKING** THIS UP, AREN'T YOU? THE WHOLE STORY! YOU **NEVER** WORKED AT BLACK MESA! YOU WEREN'T PART OF THE EXPERIMENT!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'VE BEEN STANDING HERE LISTENING TO THIS! YOU'RE LIKE... LIKE... SOME SORT OF MENTALLY CHALLENGED KEYSER SOZE!



SO, CHEESE DIDN'T REALLY DESTROY OUR PLANET?

CHEESE DIDN'T DESTROY **ANYTHING**, TIMMY.

LET'S DITCH THIS LIAR AND GO CATCH UP WITH FREEMAN.



HERSCHEL, DWIGHT, CHARLENE, AND GORDON BEST FRIENDS 4-EVA!









SO, WHAT'S NEW, BRO? I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE THE SEVEN HOUR WAR ENDED!

THERE WAS AN END TO THE WAR? THAT'S FUNNY...



... 'CUZ I'M STILL FIGHTING IT.



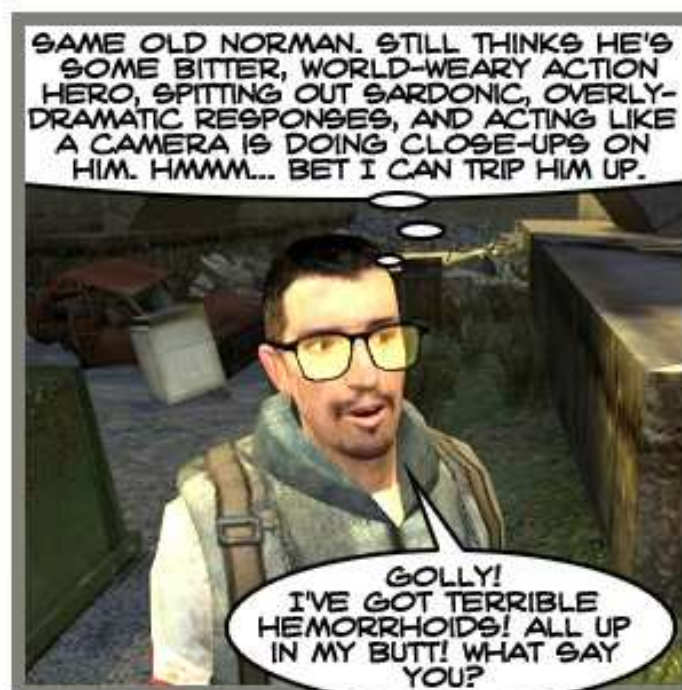
HEY, ARE YOU SMOKING? WELL...

...AS A DOCTOR WHO WEARS GLASSES, I SHOULD WARN YOU OF THE HEALTH RISKS!

IF THEY LET YOU BECOME A DOCTOR...



THEN EVERYONE'S HEALTH IS AT RISK.



SAME OLD NORMAN. STILL THINKS HE'S SOME BITTER, WORLD-WEARY ACTION HERO, SPITTING OUT SARDONIC, OVERLY-DRAMATIC RESPONSES, AND ACTING LIKE A CAMERA IS DOING CLOSE-UPS ON HIM. HMMM... BET I CAN TRIP HIM UP.

GOLLY! I'VE GOT TERRIBLE HEMORRHOIDS! ALL UP IN MY BUTT! WHAT SAY YOU?



YOU THINK IT'S PAINFUL SITTING DOWN?

TRY TAKING A STAND.

DAMN HE'S GOOD!

DEAR DR. BREEN,

HOW ARE THINGS
IN THE CITADEL?
AWESOME?

HOPEFULLY, THEY'RE GOING BETTER
THAN THINGS ARE DOWN HERE!

DON'T YOU HATE IT WHEN RELATIVES
COME TO VISIT? FOR INSTANCE...

MY TWIN BROTHER IS IN TOWN, AND
NOT ONLY DID HE ARRIVE WITHOUT
CALLING FIRST, HE WANTS TO GO
DO ALL THIS TOURIST STUFF!

HE MADE ME TAKE HIM TO SOME
MUSEUM. LAME! IT'S CALLED "THE
OVERWATCH NEXUS". I GUESS IT
HAS SOME EXHIBIT ON THE ROOF
HE REALLY WANTS TO SEE. NOW,
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ART,
BUT I KNOW WHAT I LIKE...

ANYWAY, THERE'S A LINE, AND THEY'RE
ONLY LETTING US IN THREE OR FOUR
AT A TIME. I THINK IT'S BECAUSE
THAT FREEMAN GUY IS IN THERE.

...AND I DON'T LIKE ART. PLUS, I
WANTED TO GO SEE "STOMP".

THIS MUSEUM
BETTER AT LEAST
HAVE SOME
DINOSAURS.

SPEAKING OF "STOMP", SOMEONE
JUST GOT IN LINE BEHIND US, AND
THEY'RE MAKING A RACKET! C-YA!

SIGNED,
A CONCERNED
CITIZEN.

STUPID BROTHER. HE'S ALWAYS MAKING ME DO THINGS I... HEY, THAT'S ODD... I DIDN'T NOTICE THIS BIG HOT SIZZLING SINGULARITY CANNON BEAM HERE EARLIER... WONDER WHERE IT CAME FROM?



OH, **GROSS**. IT'S COMING OUT OF THAT STRIDER'S WANG!



GET DOWN, YOU IDIOT!



CAN'T YOU GO FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT ALMOST DYING? NOW, STAY DOWN! NO TALKING, NO MOVING, NO BREATHING!

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!



HE'S NOT THE BOSS OF ME.

AND NO THINKING!





MY GOD... LOOK AT US, NORMAN...
POINTING GUNS AT EACH OTHER LIKE
WE'RE CHARACTERS IN SOME JOHN
WOO MOVIE... WE'RE **BROTHERS**,
DAMMIT! WE'RE BETTER THAN THIS!



I'M NOT
POINTING **ANYTHING**
AT YOU, MORON!



OH, NOW WE'RE ARGUING AGAIN!
CAN'T WE GET ALONG FOR A EVEN A
MINUTE WITHOUT ARGUING? WITHOUT
GUNPLAY? WITHOUT ONE OF US **PUSHING**
THE OTHER LIKE A BIG MEAN JERK?

FOR THE **LAST TIME**... I DIDN'T **PUSH**
YOU. I **SAVED** YOU. AND IF YOU'RE
TOO **STUPID** TO REALIZE THAT, THEN
IT'S PRETTY DAMN OBVIOUS I SHOULDN'T
HAVE EVEN BOTHERED. YOU'RE NOT
WORTH SAVING. YOU'RE NOT WORTH
ANYTHING. YOU...



...ARE
WORTHLESS. I
SHOULD HAVE LET
YOU DIE.



OH,
WHAT'S **THIS**? DID
YOUR FACE REGISTER
A BRIEF FLICKER OF
COMPREHENSION?
AMAZING.



DID
SOMETHING GET
THROUGH TO THAT TINY
PEA BRAIN OF YOURS?
IT'S ABOUT TIME.

RISE AND SHINE, GORDON. YOU'RE
NOT A DOCTOR. YOU'RE NOT A HERO.
YOU'RE A HELPLESS DOPE. TRUTH
HURTS. LIFE SUCKS. BUT IT'S TIME TO
WAKE UP... AND SMELL THE ASHES.



SNIFFLE

YOU NEED
TO CRY? FINE. TAKE
A MINUTE. TAKE FIVE.
WHEN YOU'RE DONE,
JOIN ME IN THE REAL
WORLD.



BAD NEWS, SIR... THE OVERWATCH NEXUS HAS BEEN TAKEN, GROUND FORCES HAVE BEEN WIPE OUT, AND THE STRIDERS HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.

ANYTHING ELSE?

SOMEONE APPARENTLY ATE ALL YOUR RANCH-FLAVORED SUNCHIPS.

NOT TO WORRY! THE CITADEL IS SEALED UP TIGHT! NO REBELS WILL BE GETTING IN HERE!

BOOP

BAD NEWS, SIR. GORDON FREEMAN IS INSIDE THE CITADEL.

WHEN I SAID "IN HERE" I MEANT, YOU KNOW. IN YOUR OFFICE. NO REBELS WILL GET IN-

HEY, DR. BREEN! THE DOOR WAS OPEN SO I FIGURED I'D JUST COME ON IN! OH, HI, MR. HENDERSON!

HENDERSON... YOU'VE FAILED ME FOR THE LAST TIME...

BAD NEWS, SIR. YOU CAN'T USE THE "DARK SIDE" TO "FORCE-CHOKE" ME.

JUST ONCE YOU COULD PRETEND!

WELL, MY THROAT IS SORTA SCRATCHY. BUT IT COULD BE ALL THOSE SUNCHIPS I JUST ATE.



WHERE'S FREEMAN? I DON'T SEE HIM ON ANY OF THESE SECURITY MONITORS!

THERE HE IS. SUBLEVEL SIX. ENTERING A VACANT STALKER CONTAINMENT TRANSPORT MODULE.



I CALL 'EM STALKER STOWERS!

THAT MORON. HE CLIMBED WILLINGLY INTO WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A STEEL COFFIN.

A STEEL COFFIN THAT CAN'T BE OPENED FROM THE INSIDE, AND WE CONTROL WHERE IT GOES.



THEN IT'S OVER. SHEEZ, THAT WAS EASY. TAKE THE MEN OFF HIGH ALERT.

IS THAT SUCH A GOOD IDEA, SIR?

FREEMAN IS CLEARLY AN IDIOT, HENDERSON. HOW LONG DO COMPLETE IDIOTS USUALLY SURVIVE?





SO, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT. WE HAD FREEMAN LOCKED IN A METAL BOX, WE TOOK AWAY HIS WEAPONS, BUT NOW HE'S LOOSE AND HIS GRAVITY GUN IS SUPER-CHARGED AND CAN TOSS SOLDIERS AROUND.



WELL, SIR--

IT'S ALL MR. HENDERSON'S FAULT!

VERY WELL. PLAN B IT IS. I USE THE TWO VANCES FOR LEVERAGE, I TAUNT FREEMAN FROM THE VIDEO SCREENS, AND I PRETEND THIS WAS ALL PART OF THE PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING. OH, AND HENDERSON?



YOU'RE FIRED.

TOUGH BREAK, MAN. I DID WHAT I COULD.



FIRED, HUH. FINE. FINE! SCREW THIS JOB! HAPPY HOUR, HERE I COME!

YOU CAN'T GO BAR-HOPPING. THERE ARE REBELS ALL OVER THE CITY. THEY'LL SHOOT YOU ON SIGHT!



NOT IF I TAKE OFF MY UNIFORM! HOW WILL THEY KNOW I'M A COMBINE WITHOUT MY UNIFORM?

I'M PRETTY SURE THEY'LL KNOW.

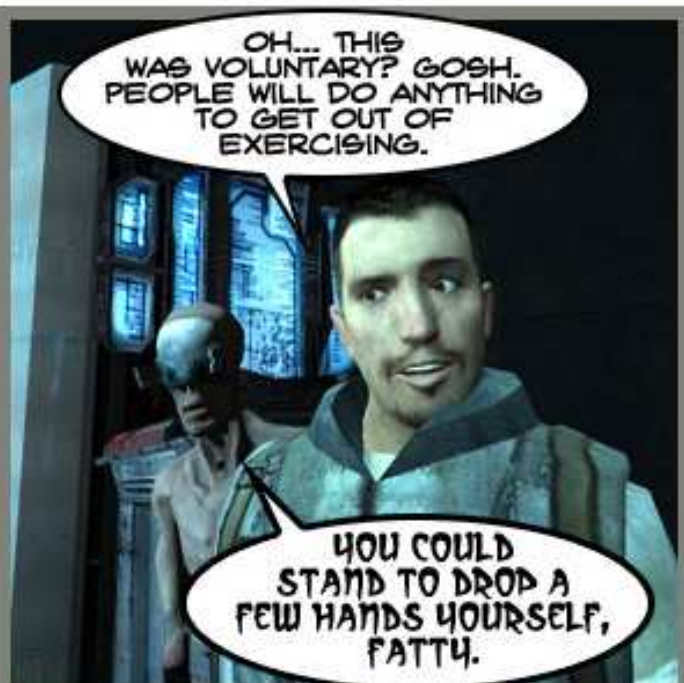


WHAT GIVES ME AWAY? THE CHALKY SKIN? THE WASTE PORT STICKING OUT OF MY ABDOMEN? MY MECHANO-TESTICLES?

WELL, I WAS GONNA SAY IT WAS YOUR PROUD MILITARY BEARING, BUT NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...



THEY GAVE YOU MECHANO-BALLS? LUCKY!

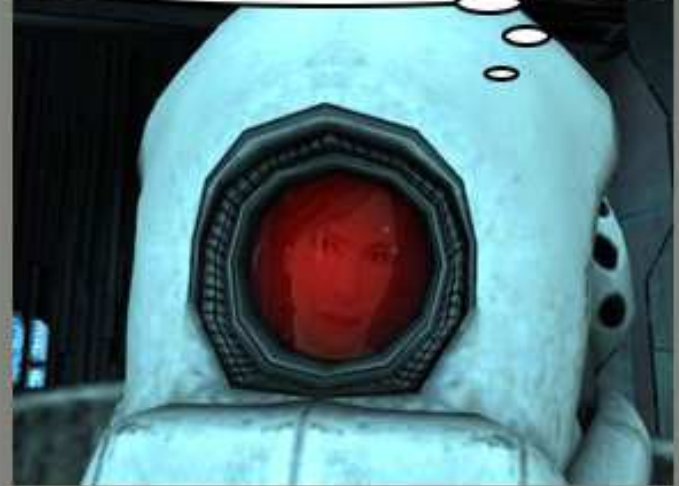




HMMM... PARTS
OF THIS LADY LOOK **VERY**
FAMILIAR... OH YEAH! IT'S, UM...
JULIE... MOTHBERGER. I REMEMBER
HER FROM THE **BLACK**
MESA CHAPTER.
OF MY LIFE.



SHE WAS WORKING WITH THE REBELS,
THOUGH... WHICH MEANS SHE'S A
TRAITOR! SHE MUST BE HERE TO KILL
POOR DR. BREEN! I'D BETTER
NOT LET HER KNOW WHO I AM, OR
THAT I'VE DISCOVERED HER PLAN...



SHE'S STARING AT ME... WAIT! DOES
SHE KNOW I'M DR. BREEN'S SWORN
PROTECTOR? 'CUZ I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW
THAT UNTIL JUST NOW WHEN I DECIDED I
WAS. DAMN, SHE'S GOOD! I'D BETTER
ACT LIKE A COMBINE BEFORE MY
COVER IS BLOWN!



VOOT VOOT!
I AM A RO-BOT! PLEASE
FEED ME E-LEC-TRI-CI-TY! NEED
IN-PUT! OIL MY HINGES! IN-SERT
CARD AND EN-TER PIN! BLEEPLE
BLURBLE FWEET!



OKAYYYY... THAT
WAS... UNEXPECTED.
I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT
THE COMBINE AREN'T
ROBOTS.



OH. THAT WAS
JUST... COMBINE HUMOR!
YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE.
I MEAN... **WE** ARE. **WE** COMBINE.
OF WHICH I AM ONE. OF THEM.
I MEAN, **US**. **WE** MEAN, **US**.
HERE, LET ME START
OVER.

HI, I'M GORDON
FROHMAMDAMMIT!



HINGES,
GORDON? REALLY?
WERE YOU SUPPOSED
TO BE A ROBOT MAILBOX
OR SOMETHING?

MOSSMAN. HER NAME SHOULD BE BOSSMAN. "WAIT IN THERE," SHE SAYS. "DON'T TALK," SHE SAYS. "STOP SCRATCHING YOUR BUTT," SHE SAYS. WHAT A B--- HEY, IS THAT...



IS THAT... FREEMAN? HE CLIMBED INTO ANOTHER STALKER POD? MAN, WHAT AN IDIOT.

WELL, SINCE HE'S ALL HELPLESS, I'LL JUST HELP MYSELF TO THE GRAVITY GUN. MY GRAVITY GUN.



I'LL TAKE HIM FROM HERE.

AND I'LL TAKE THIS FROM HERE.



OOH, I'M GONNA LIFT THINGS, AND THROW THINGS, AND MAYBE STACK THINGS, AND DO OTHER THINGS TO THINGS!

I MISSED MY CLAW SO MUCH!



ER. OOPS! DIDN'T MEAN TO WANDER INTO BREEN'S OFFICE AGAIN...



WHAT'S THIS?

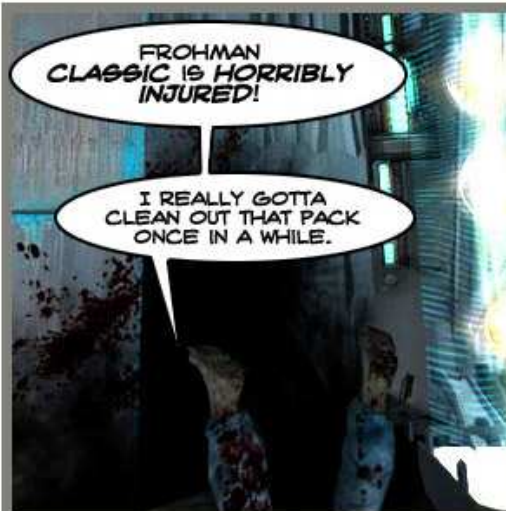
OH, PUT IT OVER THERE.



AW... I WANTED TO PLAY WITH IT NOW. GUESS I'LL LEAVE IT ON HIS DESK AND COME BACK LATER.



AT LEAST I DON'T HAVE TO HANG AROUND FOR THIS OFFICE MEETING. THESE THINGS ARE ALWAYS SO UNEVENTFUL.



WELL, THAT WAS A LONG CLIMB UP THE FIRE ESCAPE, BUT THERE'S FREEMAN! SHOOTING ORBS AT SOME METAL THINGIES! NOT... *QUITE*... THE BOSS-FIGHT I WAS ANTICIPATING...



BUT THOSE METAL THINGIES ARE *SPINNING*, AND IF SCIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT IF SOMETHING IS *SPINNING*, IT'S *IMPORTANT*.



SO, I HAVE TO KILL FREEMAN BEFORE HE KNOCKS ALL THOSE METAL THINGIES OFF!



READY... AIM....

WAIT... I... I CAN'T DO THIS. I CAN'T JUST... *KILL GORDON FREEMAN*. I CAN'T!



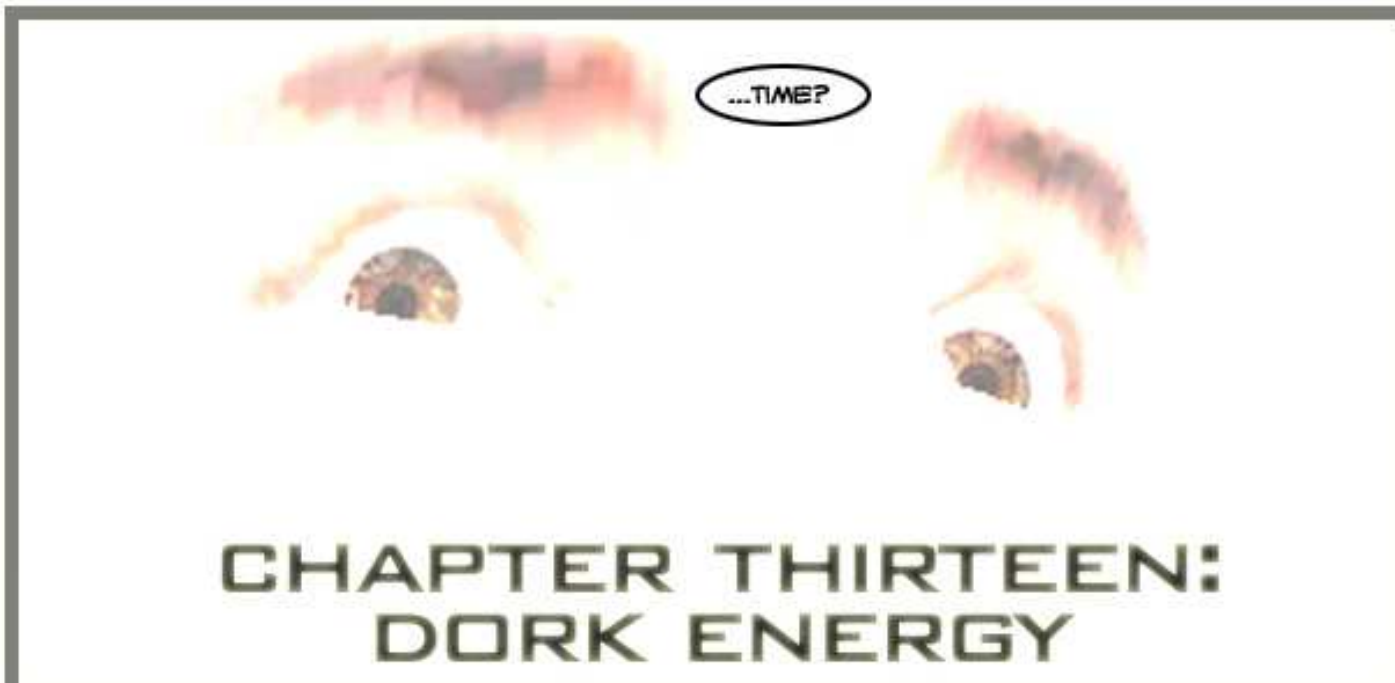
NOT WITHOUT DELIVERING AN ULTRA COOL TAGLINE *AS* I'M KILLING HIM! IF THE MOVIES HAVE TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT YOU HAVE TO MAKE SOME CLEVER PUN OR REMARK WHEN YOU WASTE A DUDE!

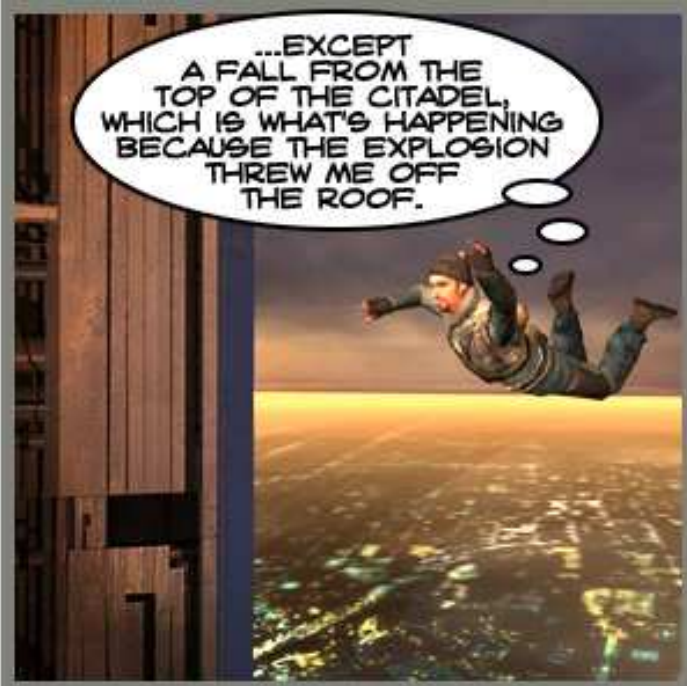


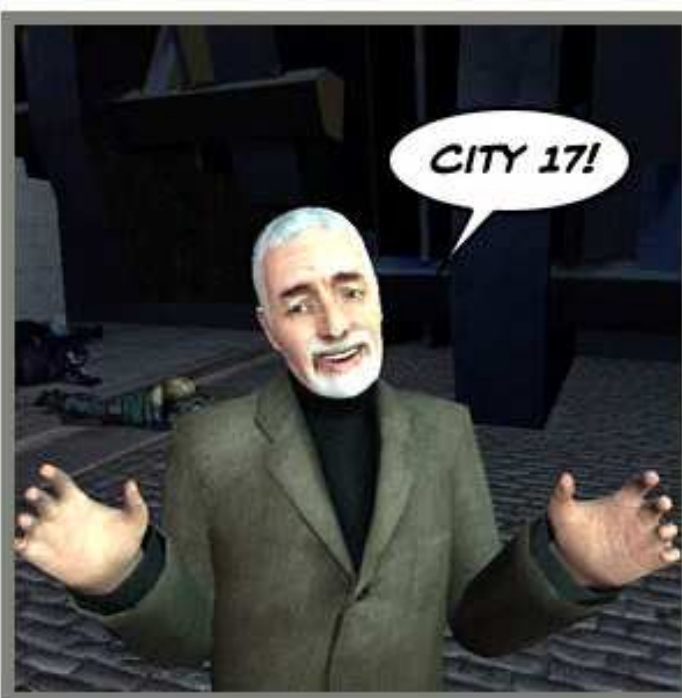
I'M KILLING *FREEMAN*... WITH A *CROSSBOW*. WHAT WOULD BE A CLEVER THING TO SAY ABOUT THAT? HMMM...











FUNNY. THE COMBINE HAVE PUT ME IN CHARGE OF SEVENTEEN CITIES, AND EACH ONE HAS WOUND UP IN TOTAL RUIN AND CHAOS. DOES THAT MEAN I'M A TERRIBLE ADMINISTRATOR?

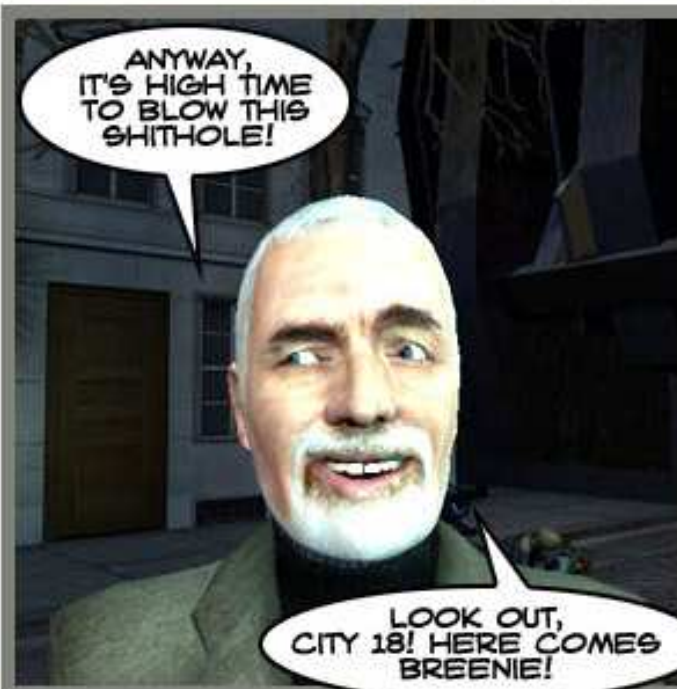


NAH, MUST JUST BE BAD LUCK.

WELL, THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT FREEMAN THINKS I'M DEAD. OR MAYBE THAT I'VE TRANSFERRED MY MIND INTO THE BODY OF A GIANT SLUG. HAH HAH! YOU WISH, SUCKER!



ANYWAY, IT'S HIGH TIME TO BLOW THIS SHITHOLE!



LOOK OUT, CITY 18! HERE COMES BREENIE!

DEAR DR. BREEN,

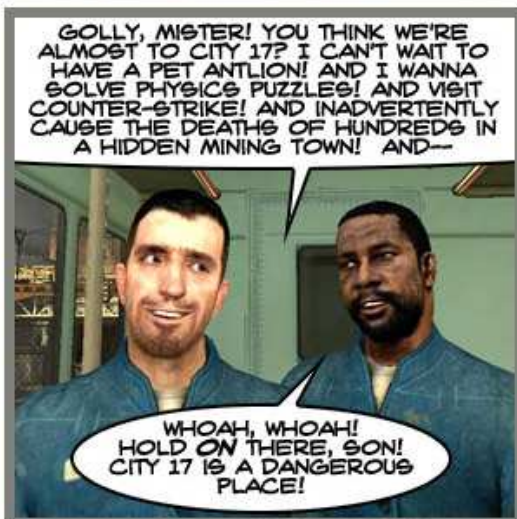
IS THAT YOU I'M PLUMMETING TOWARDS?

SIGNED,
A CONCERNED CITIZEN.



PS: WRITE BACK! NEED AN ANSWER QUICK!





WELL, LOOKS LIKE NO ONE IS GONNA
SHOW UP AND SAVE ME AT THE LAST
SECOND OR ANYTHING. FIGURES! AH
WELL, GUESS I'LL JUST DIE. CAN'T BE
THAT BAD... THINGS WILL SLOWLY
GO ALL BLACK AND THEN...



UH.
OR MAYBE THINGS
WILL GO BLACK IN A
BIG GOSH-DARN
HURRY?



RRRAAAAHHH...

IS THAT...
JESUS? OR NOT
SO MUCH?



LAAAHHH...

...AAHHLAAA...



...AAHHRAAAA...

...LLLAAAAAA...



...AAHH...

...RRAHH...

...RAHHH...

...LAARAAAA...











A comic book panel showing three characters from behind, looking at a dead man lying on a rooftop. The character on the left has a green, textured head. The character in the middle wears a black beanie and a green tactical vest. The character on the right wears a white shirt and a green tactical vest with a red cross. The dead man is wearing a blue jacket and brown pants. A shovel lies on the ground near him. The background shows a dark, industrial setting with a large pile of debris.

HEY,
WHAT ABOUT
THIS GUY LYING ON
TOP OF DOCTOR
BREEN?

TOTALLY
DEAD.

HE'S
DEAD.

YEAH. DEAD.
DEFINITELY.

SO,
WHO WANTS TO
GET SOME
LUNCH?

SHOULDN'T
WE BE GETTING TO
THE TRAIN STATION? WE
DON'T WANT TO MISS THE
TRAIN TO EPISODE
TWO!

